ESSAYS REVIEWS,

AND

ADDRESSES.

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PREFACE.

THE following papers differ from the Theological and Philosophical Essays reserved for the next Volume, not so much in their main subject, as in their mode of treating it. In dealing with a religious problem, they address themselves, not to its theoretic essence, but to its practical bearings on human life in historic schools and organized Churches. Called forth for the most part by some social event, like "The Papal Aggression," or some special publication, like an "Oxford Tract," now half-forgotten, they might seem to be without excuse for their re-appearance; were it not that, for the right appreciation of transient phenomena, appeal must often be made to critical principles far from transient. I have given nothing a place in these pages without first satisfying myself that its mode of reasoning and rules of moral judgment are available, *mutatis mutandis*, no less for the determination of still pending questions, than for a right verdict on the parties and controversies of the past.

To no part of this volume does this remark more unreservedly apply than to a few minor pieces at the end on the true principles of religious Union. They express a life-long conviction and intense aspiration, which I formerly shared with many a friend, but which has ceased to meet with any response, beyond a little unmeaning lip-homage from those who practically contradict it. The party-spirit has penetrated even to the seats of worship. The centrifugal dread of theological error overpowers at present the centripetal forces of reverence and love. But

it may not always be so. And I cannot withdraw a protest, however hopeless it may seem, against allowing the Christian Church to remain a mere cluster of rival orthodoxies disowning and repelling each other, while, in the inmost heart of all, secret affections live and pray, with eye upturned to the same Infinite Perfection, and tears let fall for the same universal sorrows.

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I.

CHURCH AND STATE.*

THE questions which engage the attention of speculative men often appear to have little connection with the actual affairs of their time; and are regarded, both by those who discuss them and by those who despise them, as mere ideal things, touching at no point the realities amid which they appear. Yet this estimate, invariably made by contemporaries, is as invariably reversed by posterity. In the historical retrospect of any period, the relation between its Thought and Action becomes clear; and its philosophy appears, no less than its poetry, its art, or even its polity, distinctly expressive of its real internal life. Nay, the very literature which most affects universality is often most deeply stamped with the characteristics of age and race. The genius of a peculiar civilization, slowly and obscurely rising, appears to reach its culminating intensity in its philo-

* "The Ideal of a Christian Church considered in Comparison with existing Practice." By Rev. W. G. Ward, M.A., Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. Second Edition. 1844.

"The Kingdom of Christ delineated; in Two Essays, on our Lord's own Account of his Person and of the Nature of his Kingdom, and on the Constitution, Powers, and Ministry of a Christian Church, as appointed by himself." By Richard Whately, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin. 1841.

"On the Constitution of the Church and State, according to the Idea of each." By Samuel Taylor Coleridge. 1839.

"Fragment on the Church." By Thomas Arnold, D.D., late Head Master of Rugby School. 1844.—*Prospective Review*, May, 1845.

sophy. Standing at that point of its culture, we occupy the precise meridian from which it looked forth on the universe. What it missed and what it saw, what it loved and what it hated, all its conceptions of truth and all its aspirations after good, are collected there, and so constructed into a systematic whole, as to be apprehensible at a single view. There is nothing more absolutely Hellenic than the Dialogues of Plato, or more distinctively mediæval than the writings of Thomas Aquinas: the England of the Reformation perfected itself in Locke, and the France of the Revolution is reflected in Diderot. He who would thoroughly appreciate the actuating spirit of any period must study, not only the debates of its Senates, but the discussions of its Schools.

In the theories of Society produced by the great masters of thought in ancient and in modern times, we find this remarkable difference: that with the former the grand problem is, to adjust the relations of the State to the Individual; with the latter, of the State to the Church. Yet the change, when rightly interpreted, will appear a change rather of names than of things, and presents us only with two cases of a problem essentially one and the same. No one can suppose that the agency of the *Individual*, so much guarded against in the ideal communities of the Greek philosophers, has vanished from modern society, and carried off the difficulties which its presence was once felt to introduce. Nor is it correct to imagine that the influences which we denote by the word *Church* constitute a new element special to Christian nations, and had not to be taken into account in schemes of ancient polity. They were in truth comprised in the Hellenic idea of the *State*; which was not equivalent, as with us, to the mere aggregate of individual interests in respect to physical good, but represented all those moral ends which transcend personal happiness, and constitute the τελειότατον τέλος of human life. An institution for the protection of "body and goods" would have been considered by Plato as a club of private

persons requiring to be strictly watched; or at most as a police organization subsidiary only to the true aims of government: while, on the other hand, the direct training of individual character, the influence over prevailing habits, the maintenance of the highest sentiments, which we consider the proper business of the Church, he claimed as characteristic functions of the public polity. So that, when we look to the principles of human nature operative in each, we find in the modern *State* only the corporate existence of the ancient ἰδιώτης, and in the ancient πόλις the territorial sovereignty of the modern ἐκκλησία. The real subject of controversy is at bottom still the same; as to the proper sphere and limits, in the affairs of men, of Self-will on the one hand and Reverence on the other. That the mere *form* of the question has undergone a change, is a natural consequence of the *new cast* which has been given to the elementary forces of social life. The Greek mythology and worship were, for the most part, *unmoral*, and had little tendency to control the individual will by a sentiment of duty; and to inspire and maintain in a people the sense of a law higher than themselves, philosophers, left at fault by the Temple, looked to the Senate-house. The Christian faith, on the other hand, is in its very essence *moral*, and, wherever taken to heart, has established over private life the august rule of conscience. Religion, in its proper sense, having thus gone over from the State to the Individual, has left the functions of the sovereign power in a reduced condition, and made them rather protective of the personal desires, than an encroachment upon them: and hence the modern notion of the purely *negative* office of government, and the limitation of its action to what are called *secular* affairs.

It is easy to understand, when these changes are taken into account, why men whose minds were purely antique—as Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle—regarded the State as wholly *including* all the influences now contained under our word "Church," while men in sympathy with modern

ideas—as Warburton and Locke—regard it as wholly *excluding* them; why writers imbued with the wisdom of *both* periods—as Hooker and Arnold—refuse to admit either agency as prohibitive of the other, and therefore pronounce the two spheres of operation absolutely coincident; and why those who engage themselves chiefly with the *transition* from the Heathen to the Christian civilization should admire, with Mr. Ward, the sacerdotal system of the Middle Ages, which practically leavened the mass of European population with Christian ideas, and should desire to subordinate the human sovereignty of government to the divine supremacy of the Church.

At the present moment we can turn our eyes to no considerable province of Christendom, which is not agitated by the contest, between the State and the Church, for the private life of individuals. There seems to be a general conviction that the Reformation has developed itself into an excessive self-will; that its maxims have weakened religious unity, and relaxed temporal authority; that the great multitude of men require more systematic guidance, more protection from temptation, more steady help towards a Christian life, than are secured by its methods, ever alternating between the repose of latitudinarian ease, and paroxysms of importunate zeal. That the *let-alone system* is incompetent to the moral management of the new economical conditions under which society exists, is the inference generally drawn from the frightful mass of practical Heathenism existing in the heart of Christian countries. But whether the new and needed power shall be assumed by the sceptre or the cross; whether either can make good its exclusive prerogative, from natural reason, from human prescription, from divine ordination, whether both must concur, and lay aside all mutual jealousy in a work demanding alike the strength of the one and the persuasion of the other,—are questions by which the whole mind of Europe is vehemently moved. Scotland, impatient of the restraints imposed by the law

on its ecclesiastical activity, sets up its Free Church. Ireland, ruled by priests, is tempting the State—too long hated and defied—to seek alliance with the only power through which the functions of government can be recovered. England, ashamed of its neglected population, is agitated by the rival efforts of a repentant legislature and a repentant clergy, aiming to regulate the labour, to abate the ignorance, to elevate the desires of the people, the one by legalized discipline, the other by a sacerdotal police. France, with a Catholic king, whose policy has been indulgent to a clergy long despised, sees its Church unsatisfied, and resolved to dispute with the University the right of control over public instruction. Switzerland becomes the centre of anxious attention to all Europe, while deciding the fate of the Jesuits, to whom Lucerne had intrusted the education of her citizens. And if at Treves another Luther has arisen in the person of Ronge, it is from too bold an attempt to reassert the power of Ultramontane superstition over the Catholics of modern Germany. Everywhere an aggressive action has commenced upon the private elements of society: and usually the civil and ecclesiastical powers appear as competitors for the new influence which is confessedly required. Hence the revived interest in those discussions of polity, which have at all times so much attraction for thoughtful men, and have given occasion to the works of our greatest moralists.

Of the treatises mentioned at the opening of this paper, only those of Coleridge and Arnold attempt directly to define the relation between the Church and State. The other two are wholly occupied with the internal constitution and proper office of the Christian Church considered by itself. Incidentally, however, a State theory is involved in this narrower discussion: for in proportion as the range of ecclesiastical functions is made to take in more or less of the moral work of society, will less or more remain for the civil power to undertake. Accordingly, there is no

difficulty in perceiving that Mr. Ward and Archbishop Whately occupy the opposite extremities of political philosophy as well as of theological system. Their whole conception of human life is so different, that, in dealing with it, temporally or spiritually, each would precisely invert the rules of the other. Whatever the one delights to disparage presents the favourite views of the other; the ideas which the one has lived to expel, it is the highest ambition of the other to restore; and the lessons from Scripture, from history, from science, from reflection, which constitute the characteristic wisdom of the one, are present to the other as a never-failing stock-on-hand of fallacies and follies.

Mr. Ward maintains the world to have been prepared for a divine revelation by the inextinguishable activity of conscience; which has power, even where connected with a feeble will, to maintain a secret sense of danger, or, possibly, an ineffectual sadness of aspiration. He lays the greatest stress on the truths of Natural Religion and the obligations of Natural Law: and regards Christianity as throughout assuming these, and furnishing their supernatural complement. The Church is an institution set up for the divine guidance of men; to alarm, to counsel, to encourage them to a moral obedience, of which, without such heavenly aid, they will only have a distant and passing dream. Her title to afford this guidance must be sought, not in any mere external credentials, but in her self-evidencing power to the conscience. Hence her discipline must begin with simply taking up the disciple's existing conception of duty, and effecting its realization in his life; and for the acknowledgment of her higher laws, the admission of her doctrines, and the adoption of her characteristic methods of worship, she must rely on the enlargement of moral perception and enrichment of spiritual knowledge which the habits of a holy life invariably bring. What, now, is the nature of the institution to which so great a work is assigned? It consists of a sacerdotal order, holding a mediatorial position between a

Holy God and a sinful world; intrusted with certain mystic media, through which alone a reconciling grace can pass; and dispensing the heavenly guidance to those exclusively who will accept the sacramental rites. Thus there is no communion possible between the human conscience and the Holy Spirit except through the appointed priesthood; the whole work and strife of penitence, of aspiration, of duty, throughout the earth, is without a benediction unless offered through them. Their office is not simply *spiritual—i.e.*, to deal, by the methods of earnest wisdom, with the *spirit* or moral reason of man; but superhuman and *un*-spiritual—to hold and to distribute certain *physical* conditions of sanctity, of which they are depositaries, not from the purity of their affections, the clearness of their discernment, and the faithfulness of their wills, but from their standing in an unbroken line of ordination, reaching through the bodies of bishops to the Apostolic age. In addition, however, to their supernatural function of dispensing or withholding the divine grace and forgiveness, they have natural duties of counsel, warning, and compassion to perform. Members of a corporate community, which has gathered to it for eighteen centuries the moral experience of saintly men, and whose archives contain a record of every temptation and sorrow that can befall, and every conquest that can ennoble, the human heart, they have access to the wisdom of ages, and are trained in such familiarity with its stores as to derive from it the discipline and rules suited to every new emergency. In the private confessional they must watch and guide the individual conscience; in public convocation estimate the duty of classes, regulate the usages of professions, and pronounce on the moralities of empire. Their duties have an immense range over the morals, the discipline, the thought, the government of society. In morals they have a *negative* office, as the stern representatives of the divine abhorrence of evil: and must proclaim the hatefulness of sin by denying the communion, not only to open transgressors, but to the idolaters of wealth and the uncon-

scious slaves of low and unspiritual desires; by excluding from the education of the young every thing at variance with the tastes of a holy mind; by falling on the neck of each softened transgressor, and committing him instantly to the seclusion of some sacred retreat; by the direct training of saints, and holding up in visible contrast with the prevalent pursuit of earthly shadows an order of men wholly dedicated to heavenly realities. To this must succeed the *positive* task of watching over the *duty* of *Christians* in the two related particulars of faith and obedience; preserving perfect uniformity of language, without the slightest allowance of individual discretion, in the statement of doctrine; constantly presenting the historical Christ of the Gospels to the people as their God, who created them one by one, who is closely present with them, and knows their thoughts; and habituating them daily to the phrases expressive of the two great truths of Revelation—"Three Persons, one God,"—"One Person, two Natures." As a *disciplinary* institution, the Church must not only provide a sublime and beautiful ritual, "such as the Spirit himself has suggested to the beloved bride of Christ," but must adapt her methods of influence with versatile skill to the several classes of society. The poor are her especial charge, to whom she must never rest till full justice has been done. Such of their employments as are incompatible with the Christian life she must detect and prohibit. Their oppressors, however powerful, must be sternly denounced. Their day of rest must be guarded, and refreshed by a religious ceremonial invested with every beauty that may touch and solemnize their hearts. The rich, too, must be warned of their temptations, not only by direct resistance and reproof to the desire of wealth, but by examples of cheerful and voluntary poverty. And the educated must be saved from the dangers of corrupt admirations and a mere diabolical acuteness, by imparting in early life the Catholic rather than the Classical idea of heroism; and throughout his course keeping the student closely implicated in habit with the discipline and offices of the Church.

Perhaps the hardest task imposed by Mr. Ward upon his Church is, to maintain supremacy over the *thought* of society. For this end he requires her to create a new literature and philosophy, antagonistic to that which, he complains, the spread and advancement of knowledge has put into the hands of unbelievers. She must find a way of prevailing over the apparent results of the modern criticism and exegesis; must relieve the Old Testament of the difficulties with which historical research painfully oppresses it; must harmonize the Hebrew cosmogony with the discoveries of modern science; and, in order to guide the reaction against the infidel philosophy of the last century, must produce a new system of metaphysics, capable of coping with the subtlety of Protestant analysis, and of giving a scientific basis to the Catholic system. Finally, the influence of the Church over the *body politic* must be obtained, not by aspiring to the direct administration of State affairs, but by proclaiming the application of Christian principles to political government; by denouncing State sins; by guiding the popular eagerness for redress. Nor are more positive interpositions to be avoided. Rules must be made for almsgiving, to correct the cold-hearted morality of economists. It must be authoritatively settled what causes a barrister may plead,—what books a bookseller may distribute. And above all, the education of the people must be undertaken by the Church, and a subsequent control over their habits be maintained, with a special view to counteract the evils, mental and moral, arising from the excessive division of labour. All these duties devolve upon ecclesiastics, not by delegation from the State, but by supernatural appointment from God. Their long neglect is to be deplored with a greater sorrow than for any unfaithfulness towards men; and they are to be resumed with the consciousness of an authority above the law.

From this imperfect sketch of Mr. Ward's "Ideal," it will be evident that, with him, *the Church* is constituted wherever *the clergy* exist; that its *origin* is higher than

that of society, and its *rights* beyond the reach of the consentaneous will of men; that the sphere of its power is coextensive with human life, and embraces, therefore, the whole range of the State's activity; that it may not, unless through the law, enforce its claims by the temporal sword, but may cut off offenders from communion with divine mercy; may "declare war in the name of the Lord against wickedness in high worldly places, and draw the spiritual sword which has so long rusted in its scabbard." (p. 437.)

We know of no living writer, of any reputation as a thinker, who has proved so little, and disproved so much, as Archbishop Whately. And on no one of his works is his negative mode of treatment more impressed than on the Essay now before us. We close it with the clearest knowledge of what the kingdom of Christ is *not;* of the powers which its ministers must disown; of the purposes they cannot serve; of the spurious origin of almost every thing that occurs to the mind when the Church system is spoken of, catechisms, creeds, articles, liturgy, sacramental forms, ordination, rubrics, canons, and episcopacy itself. But of any high and holy ends worthy of a divine institution; of any principle of unity connecting its parts into a spiritual whole; of the nature of the vital activity which should pervade the organism of the Church, and its relation to the other forces which determine the phenomena of society—the faintest possible conception is given. As the temple, with its metropolitan priesthood, is the type of Mr. Ward's Church; so is the municipal synagogue, with its lay officers, of Dr. Whately's. Our Lord determined to gather his disciples after his departure into local societies. In the constitution of these, the practice of the synagogue was naturally followed: for there it was that the Apostolic missionaries first sought a hearing; and if they failed to convince the majority of the assembly, so that the synagogue became a church, the converted minority, on their secession, followed in their new combination the model with which they were familiar. Hence in the earliest Christian communities, the

deacons, the presbyters, the bishops, had like duties with the officers of the same designation in a Jewish association of worshippers. The effect of this statement on the pretensions of the ecclesiastical body is evident. The several *societies of disciples* may claim a direct sanction from Christ, since he distinctly provided for their formation; but he took no notice of the *functionaries* who were to administer their affairs; and that they exist at all, arises only from the wants and convenience of the associations which they represent; every society having its officers, its rules, its terms of membership. And as for the particular nature of the offices thus created, *that* grew naturally out of an historical antecedent which cannot possibly impart to it any superhuman authority: for, whatever obscurity hangs over the origin of the Hebrew synagogues, they certainly cannot be referred to the Mosaic law, or to any causes higher than the human will. Hence a Church is a "congregation of faithful men," to which the clergyman is but an appendage, with title depending on his being the "regularly appointed officer of a regular Christian community." Each society, moreover, is as wholly independent of the rest, as the synagogue of Athens from that of Cæsarea; connected indeed by sympathy, and at liberty to establish a federal combination with others: but no longer bound by such organization, when it fails to accomplish its appointed end. The Church has accordingly no unity but in name; it is wholly provincial, and has no visible head, either individual or collective. And whatever range of discretion may be left as to the functions of the clergy, one thing is absolutely excluded by the very religion which they serve: they have no templar and sacerdotal duties, can offer no sacrifice, absolve from no sin, and stand between no man and his God. And even in the prosecution of its legitimate ends, the Church must wholly abstain from secular coercion, as an encroachment on the "things that are Cæsar's," and alien to the spirit of a religion whose "kingdom is not of this world." All temporal sanctions are replaced in Christian societies by the

sanction of the world to come. This it is which, according to Archbishop Whately, constitutes the *spirituality* of the kingdom of Christ. We must protest, in passing, against this prevalent but gross abuse of the word *spiritual*. It does not denote a mere far-sighted self-interest, in opposition to the narrow calculations of a worldly mind; but is the name of a higher order of motive than any prudence, long or short. Action which proceeds from personal hope or fear is wholly unspiritual: the nearness or remoteness of the pleasure or pain contemplated does not alter the moral quality, but only the sagacity, of the agent's determination: he makes an investment, in the one case for a quick return, in the other giving credit on good security; in both the transaction is strictly mercantile. Were this the difference between the foundation of the State and that of the Church, then political society would be like a partnership for prosecuting a home trade with cash payments; while Christian society would resemble a joint-stock company for colonizing some antipodal region, that, after the judicious outlay of years, might yield, not the profits of a shop, but the revenue of a commonwealth. It is the remark of Coleridge, that, whether a "man expects the *auto da fe*, the fire and fagots, with which he is threatened, to take place at Lisbon or Smithfield, or in some dungeon in the centre of the earth, makes no difference in the kind of motive by which he is influenced; nor of course in the nature of the power which acts on his passions by means of it."* That influence alone is spiritual which awakens the consciousness of obligation and the sentiments of worship.

To sum up, then, the leading particulars of Archbishop Whately's theory. The end of the Church is to enforce the moral law, as recognized among Christians, by the sanctions of a future life. The end of the State is the protection of person and property by the use of temporal sanctions. In both cases the institutions derive their existence from the component members, over whom the functionaries have no

* "Church and State," p. 134.

authority beyond that which belongs to regular official appointment. And all questions as to the internal organization of the Church, the mode of supporting its cost, and of adjusting its relations to the secular government, are open to determination by regard to expediency, provided coercion, priesthood, and a visible head be altogether disclaimed.

In one important respect Dr. Arnold occupies an intermediate position between the two writers already noticed. In his design of a Church Mr. Ward labours for Christendom, Archbishop Whately for a congregation, Arnold for a nation. The Christians of this realm constitute, in the view of the first, only an integrant part of one vast *civitas*, conscious of its unity; in that of the second, an aggregate of particular communities, forming together a local *societas*, unconscious of its unity, but collected into a class by observers from without; in that of the third, one entire and independent *civitas* among many within the wide circuit of the Christian *societas* throughout the world. This peculiarity, like every other in Arnold's theory, is singularly expressive of the character of his mind. It was not simply his historical taste, or his love of Aristotle, that led him to identify the functions of Church and State, and seek in Christianity the bond of citizenship to replace the ancient ties of race. Hooker, so induced, had done the same;—with the significant difference, that he neither hated a priesthood, nor appreciated the Puritans. Arnold's all-prevailing moral nature made him seize with avidity, from every age, all the securities for human duty which genius had devised or inspiration imparted; and reject with indignation every counterfeit pretending to do the sterling work of a responsible will. He could not, for all his faith in revelation, forego one jot of the ancient reverence for law; or, for all his high doctrine of obedience, allow the priest to touch with one of his fingers the burden of individual obligation. He would save government from degenerating into police, and Christianity into conjuring:

he had an unconquerable aversion to accept the constable as representative of the State, or the bishop of the Church. Both institutions were to him but incorporated expressions of the *conscience* of their members;—the one of its executive energy, the other of its meditative aspirations; neither, therefore, having an aim less or more comprehensive than the other; neither complete and healthy without the other; and requiring, in order to effectuate the ends of either, their coalescence into a living unity. The "Fragment on the Church" contends, no less strenuously and successfully than the "Essay on the Kingdom of Christ," against a sacerdotal system, and subordinates the ministry to the "congregation of faithful men": yet with the difference that Dr. Whately seems to be stripping the clergy of their pretensions; Dr. Arnold, to be distributing to the laity their duties: the one, impatient for the abatement of nonsense; the other, unhappy at the usurpation of a trust. Apart, however, from this characteristic difference of feeling, there is a perfect accordance between the two friends in their negative conclusions, as to the internal constitution of the Church. Nothing whatever, according to Arnold, is *instituted*, except that the disciples shall form themselves into communities, for mutual help in duty, in the same way as mere society is an aid in civilization. It is a thing authoritatively settled, that there shall be this divine polity of co-operation, for bringing the faith of Christ to the *masses* of men, and remedying the *extent* of the Fall, as individual devotedness countervails its *intensity*. But as to the modes by which this association shall conduct its contest against moral evil, and the scheme of organization by which its parts shall be maintained in active unity, all is left open to the discretion of successive ages. On this point his language is most unqualified:—

"In matters of doctrine, an opinion, however unimportant, is either true or false; and if false, he who holds it is in error, although the error may be so practically indifferent as to be of no account in our estimate of the man. But in matters of govern-

ment, I hold that there is actually no right and no wrong. Viewed in the large, as they are seen in India, and when abstracted from the questions of particular countries, I hold that one form of Church government is exactly as much according to Christ's will as another; nay, I consider such questions as so indifferent, that, if I thought the government of my neighbour's church better than my own, I yet would not, unless the case were very strong, leave my Church for his, because habits, associations, and all those minor ties which ought to burst asunder before a great call, are yet of more force, I think, than a difference between Episcopacy and Presbytery, unless one be very good of its kind, and the other very bad."—*Life*, Vol. II. p. 105.

The only material point on which Arnold dissented from the opinions expressed in Whately's Essays was the right of the Church to wield the temporal sword. And this, as it appears to us, was a difference more in words than in reality, and resolved itself into the question, whether the power which enforced the laws in a Christian country should be *called* the State or the Church. Arnold was as far as his friend from claiming coercive prerogatives for either ecclesiastical officers or worshipping assemblies: all judicial and executive authority he would leave where now it rests: only he would regard the functionaries who exercise it as deputed, not by the material interests, but by the moral sense of the community, and standing for the law of Christ by which all are bound. This ascription of a sacred character to authorized and constitutional rulers is all that Arnold meant by his desire to make "the Church a sovereign society." He wanted, not more power to the Church, but a more Christian temper to the State. He could not endure that any part of life should escape the reach of obligation; that the process of social organization should be thought to give rise, at any step, to relations exempt from moral inspection; that any voluntary deeds between citizen and citizen, between subjects and rulers, between the commonwealth and foreign states, should be treated as less amenable to the divine rule of conscience,

than the private conduct which is abandoned wholly to its sway. Hence he was impatient of the false distinction between "secular" and "spiritual" things; under cover of which he believed that countless questionable ways of thought and act passed without a just verdict, or even an inquiring challenge, and whole provinces of life were ceded as irreclaimable for Christian cultivation. He felt how untruly this distinction presents the real difference between the pursuit of physical and that of moral good, as if they were each a separate business, to be achieved in society by different agents, in individuals by different acts. As in the case of private persons there are not two sets of employments, one irresponsibly abandoned to the natural desires, the other the exclusive realm of duty; but moral good consists in the regulated pursuit of natural good according to a divine and holy law: so in communities there are not two spheres of work and office, one with only physical ends, the other with only spiritual; but all parts of the body politic must serve one supreme intent, viz., that the whole natural life of society shall also be a moral life. Arnold, accordingly, with adventurous nobleness, insisted on carrying the Christian standard through every department of the state: sovereign and council, judges and ministers, legislators and magistrates, were to regard themselves as functionaries of a Christian Church. Nay, he did not shrink from applying his principle to the province of government most difficult to reduce under the rule of truth, honesty, and justice,—we mean, the foreign relations of the commonwealth. He had no idea of leaving, in diplomacy, a privileged nest of retreat for chicanery and fraud; or in war itself, a licensed escape from moral obligation. In all questions between nation and nation, in the conduct of all disputes, and the resistance of aggression, there actually *exists* a right and a wrong: and is it for Christian men to throw up these things in confusion and despair, and bid conscience turn the back till they have scrambled through a crisis they cannot manage by their rules? He was not to

be scared, therefore, by any amount of Machiavellian practice, from including ambassadors, army, and navy in the staff of his national Church. They were all instruments in that contest with moral evil, and pressure towards the highest good, which formed the true ἔργον of every Christian community, and must share alike the responsibility and the dignity of their association with such a work. Arnold would have heartily adopted his favourite Aristotle's estimate of the religious character of wise and thoughtful sway, when he identified the rule of reason and law in states with the authority of God, and said that, to allow scope for the unregulated will of governors, was to give power to the brute.* Of this sentiment, indeed, the following passage from the "Fragment" is little more than a Christian amplification :—

"It is obvious that, the object of Christian society being thus extensive, and relating not to ritual observances, but to the improvement of the whole of our life, the natural and fit state of the Church is, that it should be a sovereign society or commonwealth ; as long as it is subordinate and municipal, it cannot fully carry its purposes into effect. This will be evident, if we consider that law and government are the sovereign influences on human society ; that they in the last resort shape and control it at their pleasure ; that institutions depend on them, and are by them formed and modified ; that what they sanction will ever be generally considered innocent ; that what they condemn is thereby made a crime, and if persisted in becomes rebellion ; and that those who hold in their hands the power of life and death must be able greatly to obstruct the progress of whatever they disapprove of ; and those who dispose of all the honours and rewards of society must, in the same way, be greatly able to advance whatever they think excellent. So long, then, as the sovereign society is not Christian, and the Church is not sovereign, we have two powers alike designed to act upon the whole of our being, but acting often in

* Ὁ μὲν οὖν τὸν νοῦν κελεύων ἄρχειν δοκεῖ κελεύων ἄρχειν τὸν θεὸν καὶ τοὺς νόμους, ὁ δ' ἄνθρωπον κελεύων προστίθησι καὶ θηριον. —Polit. III. 16.

opposition to each other. Of these powers, the one has wisdom, the other external force and influence; and from the division of these things, which ought ever to go together, the wisdom of the Church cannot carry into effect the truths which it sees and loves; whilst the power of government, not being guided by wisdom, influences society for evil rather than for good. The natural and true state of things then is, that this power and this wisdom should be united: that human life should not be pulled to pieces between two claimants, each pretending to exercise control over it, not in some particular portion, but universally; that wisdom should be armed with power, power guided by wisdom; that the Christian Church should have no external force to thwart its beneficent purposes; that government should not be poisoned by its internal ignorance or wickedness, and thus advance the cause of God's enemy, rather than perform the part of God's vicegerent."—Ch. I. p. 10.

It is impossible, in reading this passage, not to be reminded of the well-known saying of Plato, that there can be no cessation of ills to states, or, generally, to the human race, unless either philosophers become their kings, or their so-called kings and rulers become true philosophers; and unless such a coalescence takes place between political power and philosophic wisdom, that natures devoted to either, at the expense of the other, are for the most part expressly excluded from public affairs.* To Arnold, "so natural was the union of religion with justice, that (he thought) we may boldly deem there is neither, where both are not."† And he held to the conclusion so impressively stated by Hooker:—

* Ἐὰν μὴ ἢ οἱ φιλόσοφοι βασιλεύσωσιν ἐν ταῖς πόλεσιν, ἢ οἱ βασιλῆς τε νῦν λεγόμενοι καὶ δυνάσται φιλοσοφήσωσι γνησίως τε καὶ ἱκανῶς, καὶ τοῦτο εἰς ταὐτὸν ξυμπέσῃ, δύναμίς τε πολιτικὴ καὶ φιλοσοφία, τῶν δὲ νῦν πορευομένων χωρὶς ἐφ' ἑκάτερον αἱ πολλαὶ φύσεις ἐξ' ἀνάγκης ἀποκλεισθῶσιν, οὐκ ἔστι κακῶν παῦλα, ὦ φίλε Γλαύκων, ταῖς πόλεσι, δοκῶ δὲ οὐδὲ τῷ ἀνθρωπίνῳ γένει.—De Rep. V. 473, D.

† Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, B. 5, § 1.

"Seeing, therefore, it doth thus appear that the safety of all estates dependeth upon religion; that religion unfeignedly loved perfecteth men's abilities unto all kinds of virtuous services in the commonwealth; that men's desire in general is to hold no religion but the true; and that whatsoever good effects do grow out of *their* religion who embrace, instead of the true a false, the roots thereof are sparks of the light of truth, intermingled with the darkness of error,—because no religion can wholly and only consist of untruths,—we have reason to think that all true virtues are to honour true religion as their parent, and all well-ordered commonweals to love her as their chiefest stay." —*Eccl. Pol.*, B. 5, § 1.

The views of Arnold, as to the perfect identity of aim in Church and State, set him directly at variance with the philosophy of his political party, and the theology of his ecclesiastical order. He could keep no terms with Warburton's principle, generally received by the Whigs, that—

"It was the care of the bodies, not the souls, of men that the magistrate undertook to give account of. Whatever, therefore, refers to the body is in his jurisdiction; whatever to the soul is not."—*Alliance between Church and State*, B. 1, Ch. 4.

He maintained that, if this were so, the State could not be a "*sovereign* society"; inasmuch as there would be interests above its reach, and exempt from its command; and that, as there is such a thing as spiritual good, which in the form of personal perfection, constitutes the highest end of individuals, so can nothing less than this good, in the form of a moral civilization, present a true aim for the collective will of a community. He therefore regarded everything as within the province of the State, which might elevate the life of its people; and held it the duty of government to provide for their education, to afford expression for their worship, to superintend the construction of their dwellings and the organization of their towns, and to control, with a view to moral results, the distribution of employments which might arise from the unrestrained operation of economical laws. While he separated himself

thus from "the liberals," by asserting for the commonwealth higher aims than corporeal, he stood almost alone among ecclesiastics in denying to Christianity any function that was ritual. Religion and government met on the common ground of *moral* life,—the life of responsible *man*, not of a sentient creature on the one hand, or of a magical saint on the other. In short, from both extremities he dismissed all *physical* ends, simply as such; whether of the *zoological* kind giving animal ease for this world, or of the *theological* kind, providing an enchanted safety for the next. His theory would have been complete and self-consistent if he could have adhered to his conception of the purely moral character of Christianity; and asked for no more, in his definition of a disciple, than a certain state of the conscience and affections. But this was impossible. Dealing with the Newmanites, he boldly vindicates a spiritual Gospel against a *ceremonial*. Dealing with Unitarians, he cannot allow a spiritual Gospel against a *doctrinal*. And were it even otherwise, the difficulty of managing this new ingredient of *belief* cannot be overcome. Do what you will to give exclusive prominence to the *moral* element of Christianity, still, when all that is "sacramental" is cancelled, and the minimum of creed is spared, it does not become identical with the law of conscience; it requires assent to some things not necessarily obvious to every man of good and honest heart; there is yet a residue of certain *historical* propositions to be embraced, to impose which as a condition of citizenship is certainly to exceed your prerogative as guardian of the moral life of the community. Arnold did not shrink from the practical consequences of his own scheme; he strenuously advocated the application of a theological test as a means of discriminating aliens from citizens; he resisted the removal of the Jewish disabilities; he wished to enforce a Scriptural examination in the London University; he would thank Parliament for having done away with distinctions between Christian and Christian," but "would

pray that distinctions be kept up between Christians and non-Christians."* He struggled hard, but, in our opinion, ineffectually, to reconcile this adoption of a State creed with his principle that "union of action," not "union in belief," should constitute the social bond. In one mood, he maintained that every society "has a right to *establish its own ideas*";† but if so, it "chooses for its end truth, rather than good,"—the very thing which he emphatically condemns.‡ At another time, he denies that the reception of Christianity implies any belief in "the truth of a proposition," and treats it as a purely practical allegiance, which any man may render at will, to a law of conduct; and in defence of this position, he adduces the example of the early Christians, among whom were some members "not even believing that there would be a resurrection of the dead." Then, if so, with what consistency could Dr. Arnold draw up a creed for the express purpose of defining the amount of belief sufficient to make a British citizen? He protests against Mr. Gladstone's doctrine, that the propagation and maintenance of "religious truth" are to be admitted among the proper ends of government; and considers himself as defending the very different proposition, that "man's highest perfection" should be the final aim of the State.§ But by including among the indispensable elements of human "perfection" a certain portion of "religious," and even historical "truth," he borrows the fundamental principle of the very theory he confutes, and lays himself open to every objection which can be brought against it, except as to the *extent* of its exclusiveness. There is not a consequence deducible from Mr. Gladstone's scheme, as to the treatment of dissidents, which does not equally follow from Dr. Arnold's,—with only the difference, that the sufferers are less numerous. The revival of a test-

* Life, Vol. II. p. 32.
† Life, Vol. II. p. 38.
‡ Lectures on Modern History, Vol. I., Appendix, p. 50.
§ Ibid., p. 52.

act, the enforcement of the law of religious libel, the punishment of active heresy as lawless disaffection, are direct practical corollaries from a theory which inserts the New Testament among the statutes at large, and commits the estates of the realm to the maintenance of its authority in faith and practice. The truth is, Arnold's free and true nature led him to adopt in feeling the moral and affectionate conception of Christianity, as a simple aspiration towards the ideal of character presented in its records. But when, no longer reposing in the interior of this conception, he attempted to reach its boundary, and determine the *external* relations of the religion, he found that his definition must take in certain elements of theological *belief;* and what was meant to discriminate good from evil turned out to be the old barrier between orthodox and heretic.

Such was the snare by which Arnold's divinity contrived to trip up his philosophy. That he fell into it is the more remarkable, because, in a work to which he frequently refers, Coleridge had set a signal example of its avoidance. The three writers whom we have already analysed have treated, under the name "*Church*," exclusively of the organization of *Christian* communities. To these they have referred the whole spiritual work of society, and have omitted all notice of any other possible forms which may be assumed by the agents of the higher culture of man. Accordingly, in defining the proper constitution of these agencies, their final appeal has been to Scripture and ecclesiastical experience; with their several methods of skill they have extracted a model thence, and never doubted that this would meet the exigencies of all commonwealths worthy to attract our speculations. This assumption, however natural to divines, is not satisfactory to the philosopher. He cannot but remember that human nature is older, and human population more widely spread, than Christianity; that one race, one half of the authentic annals, and one third of the present numbers of mankind, exhaust all that

is characteristic of Christendom; that the religion itself, as a social element, is but one phenomenon of that Mind and Conscience which governed life in the times of Abraham and Zoroaster, of Solon and Confucius, of Socrates and Numa, of Cato and Cratippus, no less than in those of Cyprian, Gregory, and Luther. In constructing a system of social philosophy, a securer and a wider basis must be laid than can be found in the historical phenomena, however instructive, of a particular period, however extended: and the foundation sought in the elementary tendencies and inherent instincts of that human nature which runs through all periods, and produces all histories. Coleridge has not precisely done this; but he has raised himself far above the ecclesiastical point of view. He has evolved his "Idea" of a Church from a survey of nations so vast that Christianity appears as only one of many religions illustrating its application. In the practice of the Semitic race on the one hand, and of the Kelts, Scandinavians, and Goths on the other, he finds a principle involved, by which at once to justify the existence and to try the efficiency of a National Church. All these tribes, constituting the *stirps generosa seu historica* of the world, divided the land of each country which they occupied into two portions, neither of which was to be abandoned as a possession to arbitrary self-will, apart from all *duties* attached as conditions of enjoyment. One of these portions comprised the *heritable* lots, or *propriety*, whose fiduciary character implied only private obligations, necessarily left in detail to the conscience of the individual, but secretly watched over by the conscience of the community. The other constituted a *nationalty*, or inalienable reserve for perpetual income, in which only life-interests were allowed, conditional on the performance of certain official services.* The purpose of

* It will occur to some of our readers that a similar bi-partition of the land is recommended by Aristotle; the public rents being applied to the expenses of government, the public meals (serving in

this public endowment was to provide for that higher culture of the citizens, without which civilization can make no advance, and even enjoy no stability. The end was to be obtained by the maintenance in perpetuity of a *clerisy*,—not constituting a priesthood, or dedicated to either ritual or doctrinal offices, but furnishing, first, a class of students for enlarging the range of knowledge; next, a class of instructors for effecting its distribution.

A certain smaller number were to remain at the fountain-heads of the humanities, in cultivating and enlarging the knowledge already possessed, and in watching over the interests of physical and moral science; being likewise the instructors of such as constituted, or were to constitute, the remaining more numerous classes of the order. The members of this latter, and far more numerous body, were to be distributed throughout the country, so as not to leave even the smallest integral part or division without a resident guide, guardian, and instructor; the objects and final intention of the whole order being these —to preserve the stores and to guard the treasures of past civilization, and thus to bind the present with the past; to perfect and add to the same, and thus to connect the present with the future; but especially to diffuse through the whole community, and to every native entitled to its laws and rights, that quantity and quality of knowledge which was indispensable both for the understanding of those rights, and for the performance of the duties correspondent; finally, to secure for the nation, if not a superiority over the neighbouring states, yet an equality at least, in that character of general civilization, which, equally with, or rather more than, fleets, armies, and revenue, forms the ground of its defensive and offensive power." —*Church and State*, Ch. V. p. 46.

The true end for which this educated and educating class is created, and that on which alone the State has a right to insist, is the training of citizens in the essentials of the social character,—the diffusion among the people of

part the purpose of a poor-rate), and the *maintenance of public worship*. Τὰ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς δαπανήματα κοινὰ πάσης τῆς πόλεώς ἐστιν. ἀναγκαῖον τοίνυν εἰς δύο μέρη διῃρῆσθαι τὴν χώραν, καὶ τὴν μὲν εἶναι κοινὴν, τὴν δὲ τῶν ἰδιωτῶν.—Polit. VII. 10.

"legality, that is, the obligations of a well-calculated self-interest, under the conditions of a common interest determined by common laws." (p. 58.) The provisions for this national culture may be wholly detached from the institutions of the Christian Church: they vested, among the Hebrews, in the Levites, among the Kelts, in the Druids, before Christendom existed: and in countries of mixed religions, either receiving the advance or witnessing the retreat of Christianity, they could not be identified with an ecclesiastical system having only partial contact with the people. In some respects they have to accomplish more, in others, vastly less, than falls within the province of the Church of Christ upon the same spot;—*more*, inasmuch as they must include the support, not of theology and morals alone, but of all the sciences, not omitting those which sustain the *lay* professions of law and medicine;—*less*, because they are content with forming good subjects for the commonwealth, and stop short of the high aim at perfection through the whole inner and outer life of individuals. The functions, therefore, of the national clerisy are truly distinct from those of the Christian clergy: and in relation to the Church of the body politic, "Christianity is a *blessed accident*, a providential boon." (p. 59.) Whether, the functions being different, the functionaries can ever with advantage be the same, must depend on historical conditions present in one age, absent in another. The circumstances under which Christian institutions developed themselves in the earlier period of English history, rendered them in every way the fittest depositaries of the national trust. They were the centres of all the intellectual and spiritual light which ages of violence had left unquenched. No physical science, no mental skill, no moral art, had yet disengaged itself from their fostering shelter. They comprehended—

"all the so-called liberal arts and sciences, the possession and application of which constitute the civilization of a country,

as well as the theological. The last was indeed placed at the head of all; and of good right did it claim the precedence. But why? Because, under the name of theology or divinity were contained the interpretation of languages, the conservation and tradition of past events, the momentous epochs and revolutions of the race and nation, the continuation of the records, logic, ethics, and the determination of ethical science, in application to the rights and duties of men in all their various relations, social and civil; and last, the ground-knowledge, the *prima scientia*, as it was named,—philosophy, or the doctrine and discipline of ideas."—p. 49.

At a time when the Christian Church *in* the nation failed of no function appropriate to the Clerisy *of* the nation, ecclesiastics were naturally taken as the Officiaries also of the national Church. That they were ministers of a religion which, besides securing the civil ends, went on to accomplish something more and better, did not disqualify them for their State trust. It is only needful that their work should *comprise* an instruction of the people in legal obligations.

"Whatever of higher origin and nobler and wider aim the ministers of the national Church, in some other capacity, and in the performance of other duties, might labour to implant and cultivate in the mind and hearts of their congregations and seminaries, should include the practical consequences of the legality above mentioned. The State requires that the basin should be kept full, and that the stream which supplies the hamlet and turns the mill, and waters the meadow-fields, should be fed and kept flowing. If this be done, the State is content, indifferent for the rest, whether the basin be filled by the spring in its first ascent, and rising but a hand's-breadth above the bed; or whether, drawn from a more elevated source, shooting aloft in a stately column, that reflects the light of heaven from its shaft, and bears the *Iris, cæli decus, promissumque Jovis lucidum* on its spray, it fills the basin in its descent."—p. 59.

The fitness, however, of the ecclesiastical body for the State task confided to them diminished in proportion as

their power assumed more prominently a sacerdotal character, and their influence was exerted rather on the superstitious fears, than on the reason and conscience, of the people. When at length they lost all patriotic ties, and merely resided on the land, as members of a cosmopolitan priesthood under allegiance to a foreign head, the grossest abuses of trust occurred. Large portions of the heritable lands of the country were absorbed into the Nationalty, by bequests dictated in ghostly fear: and, on the other side, estates were sacrilegiously alienated from the Nationalty by those who were only life-trustees. The true "Idea" of the English Reformation,—though never worked out,—was to right the balance thus disturbed, and to re-impose upon the clergy the neglected conditions required of them as functionaries of the commonwealth. The Nationalty should accordingly have been allotted to the maintenance, (1.) of the Universities and great schools of liberal learning; (2.) of a pastor or parson (*persona*, exemplar of the personal character) in every parish; (3.) of a schoolmaster in every parish,—who might succeed to the pastorate; (4.) of the poor, from age or sickness; (5.) of the Church and School buildings. How far the miserably imperfect results of the Reformation in England constitute an unfitness in the Church of England for any longer performing the duties of the National Clerisy, Coleridge nowhere declares his opinion. Writing with a special reference to the Catholic Emancipation Act, he enumerates only the disqualifications for this trust peculiar to the Roman priests, viz., allegiance to a foreign power, and compulsory celibacy, in connection with an anti-national head. But his principles manifestly imply that the State may at any time vest the Nationalty in the body of men,—be they who they may,—best fitted to realize its proper ends; and if, from changes either in themselves, or in the community around them, the Clergy no longer represent and guide the intellect and conscience of the nation at large, either new orders of Educators may be added to them as the comple-

ment of their defects, or they may be wholly discarded in favour of a Clerisy of lay-instructors.

The utter contempt of "vested interests," and even disregard of individuals, in contemplation of the public weal, which marked this conception of the Church, are no less apparent in Coleridge's Theory of the State. He looks upon society, not in Arnold's way, as composed of *persons*, but as a combination of *class interests and tendencies;* while the persons change, like the atoms of an animate body, these, like its essential organs, remain through all its growth and activity, and constitute the functional powers, whose deranged or consentaneous operation determines the death or life of communities. He resolves the total well-being of a State into two elementary interests,—that of *Permanence*, represented by the landed property of a country, held (1.) by the Major Barons or Peers; (2.) by the Minor Barons or Gentry: and that of *Progression*, represented by its Personalty, under the several heads of (1.) the manufacturing people in towns; (2.) the commercial, in ports; (3.) the distributive; (4.) the professional. The negative end of all the activity of the State is, to guard the interests and concerns of the whole Proprietage, whether landed or personal; and even the protection of life and limb is an object of care only in so far as it is involved in this. But when this negative end has been attained, there still "remain its positive ends: (1.) to make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual; (2.) to secure to each of its members the hope of bettering his own condition or that of his children; (3.) the development of those faculties which are essential to his humanity, that is, to his rational and moral being."* It is evident from this that, in his estimate of the proper functions of a State, Coleridge occupies an intermediate position between Whately and Arnold; embracing within its ends more than the negative system of the former, and less than the full Christian Polity of the

* Lay Sermons, p. 415.

latter. While he would not restrict the State to a mere work of police, he does not require it to become an instrument and help to the special perfecting of private life, demanding of it, not "those degrees of intellectual cultivation which distinguish man from man in the same civilized society, but those only that raise the civilized man above the barbarian, the savage, and the brute."* Arnold nowhere gives us, so far as we remember, a hint of any thing which his State, *alias* Church, can *not* do: he affirms everywhere that it covers the whole ground of human life: no portion of the energy of individuals is left afloat, for independent action; but all is merged into the organization of the body politic or the body ecclesiastic. Coleridge, on the other hand, declares it essential to the well-being of the commonwealth, that there should be a reserve of latent power in the hands of individuals, and that this shall be maintained in due proportion to the embodied power of the State. He deprecates the loss of individuality which takes place in absolute monarchies and in absolute republics,—in the one case by autocratic annihilation, in the other by democratic absorption of private characteristics: and justly refers the practical freedom of the English people to the fact that they have *not delegated their whole power* to the Parliament and sovereign. This point secured, there is but one other condition on which the healthy action of the State depends; viz.: that there be a due proportion between the *real social influence* of its several classes and interests, and their *recognized political power.* If the Permanent and Progressive elements have their relative forces adjusted in one way in society, and in quite another in the legislature; if any class has risen into possession of influential wealth, without admission into the public franchises; or if intellect and skill obtain direct entrance to administrative offices, without any of the securities afforded by cognizable possession; this rule is violated, and the equilibrium of social functions is disturbed. It may be observed, however, that where the

* Lay Sermons, p. 415.

conditions of well-being in communities seem to be hopelessly absent, a spontaneous compensation takes place, till the requisite element has had time to unfold itself. Thus Coleridge himself remarks, that while the *Progressive* interest in our own country lay yet undeveloped, the Church in a great degree performed its functions and supplied its place; counteracting feudal tyranny and relaxing the severity of vassalage; holding forth the benefits of knowledge and the means of future civilization; and, by opening in its monasteries an asylum for fugitive dependents and oppressed franklins, becoming the nursery of towns. We would add, that at this moment a striking illustration of the same principle of compensation is working itself out before our eyes. It is undeniable that among the disorders of our English State we must reckon it not the least, that the *Progressive* interest has not political power at all in proportion to its free life and energy in society; and that the "clear and effectual majority of the lower House," provided for it in the theory of the Constitution, has been shifted into the opposite scale. Of this disorder the obstinate maintenance of the corn-laws and the game-laws are the plainest and most irritating symptom. But who can fail to observe the healthy and natural tendency of this incorrespondency to right itself? The elements which have hitherto composed the *Permanent* interest are manifestly undergoing dissolution. The *landed* influence has for ages included both the *owners* and the *occupiers* of the soil: and to regard them otherwise than as one body would have been considered, a century ago, a sign of ignorance and folly. And so it might have continued, had the *fiduciary* character of landed possession never been forgotten, and had not a course of cupidity and ambition on the part of the owners reduced the cultivators to a state of dependence and uncertainty, without any enduring stake in the fields of their own tillage. But this very dependence, this precarious tendency, converts them into mere traders; makes the principles of commercial exchange not only applicable (which of course they

must always be) to the produce of their toil, but paramount with them over every feeling which might otherwise have continued to determine their political associations. They are accordingly undergoing a transference from the *landed* to the *personal* interest; learning to regard themselves as mere capitalists; and acquiring the feelings, the notion of rights, the estimate of duties, which characterize that class. This we consider to be one of the most momentous social changes of our own time: the remoter consequence of which may be, when a system of long leases has restored the feeling of independence, to shift the *Progressive* movement of society, now dangerously limited to town populations, back among a rural yeomanry, ruled in their political aspirations by a sterling and steady sense of justice, rather than by the capricious and self-willed notions of liberty that are apt to impel the city multitudes.

We refrain from following Coleridge through his historical illustrations of his theory, from the development of the constitutional powers of the British commonwealth. What has been said will suffice to present his system of thought in comparison with Arnold's; over which it seems to us to possess two prime advantages. On the civil side, it gives a more precise and practicable definition of the proper functions of the State, and removes the negative doctrine, not by verbal arguments about "a sovereign society," but by furnishing a positive substitute. On the religious side, it has the unique merit of wholly separating the National from the Christian Church: thus vindicating the principle of public endowment for the higher culture of the nation, without implicating it with theological disputes; imposing no confession of faith as a condition of citizenship; requiring no legal definition of Christian essentials; and keeping the staff of government officiaries aloof from controversies between Episcopacy and Presbytery, Priests and Preachers. It is curious that Arnold, with his wide historical view, with his interest in modern colonization, with his epistolary connections in many lands, should have failed to perceive the

utter impracticability of his theory in such an empire as that of Great Britain. With Indians and half-castes in Canada, with Pagan aborigines in New Zealand and Australia, with Hottentots at the Cape, with the Buddhists of Ceylon, the Parsees of Bombay, the Brahmins of Bengal, and Jews everywhere, embraced within the sovereignty of England, how is it possible to make the profession of Christianity a requisite for political rights and civil offices? It is vain to thrust these vast territorities out of sight, and construct a theory that shall be bounded by the British seas. Ecclesiastical and educational institutions, direct ramifications from those at home, already exist in all our dependencies: an administrative system pervades them all; and the relation of the natives to these cannot be an external one: wealth, character, intelligence,—all the elements of social influence,—must not be disowned in behalf of religious exclusion; and once admitted as trusted functionaries of colonial governments, they surely are not to be held disqualified by creed from serving the imperial. The difficulties of Arnold's theory are great enough in England; when it is carried to the offsets from English power, it vanishes in impossibilities. Yet, widely as methods of governments must be diversified with the populations to which they are applied, a political philosophy ought surely to reach some fundamental principles which underlie them all, and to enable the widest and most various empire to preserve a characteristic unity.

We are unwilling to try our readers' patience by needlessly extending a discussion which, from the compressed form it unavoidably assumes, occasions, we fear, an unwelcome strain upon their attention. Yet we cannot close without indicating, in some imperfect way, the course of reflection by which, as we conceive, these great questions of Polity may be brought to a successful issue. We are satisfied that no test can be applied to the several competing systems of our day,—that no sound guidance can be obtained even through the confusion of the Maynooth debate,—without

adverting to the first principles of political society. Almost all the ecclesiastical schemes of our times seem to us well-reasoned from the premisses they severally assume. The voluntaryism of the Independents, the Catholicism of Mr. Ward, the Establishment scheme of Warburton and Mr. Macaulay, the National endowment of Coleridge and Chalmers, are all admirably defended, and command the assent of those who can take their first step without hesitation. But here is the difficulty. To us they seem to set out with Scriptural interpretations, or Apostolic parallels, or historical predilections, or ethical maxims, or party phrases, or rules of expediency, of the most unreal and questionable kind; to which, at all events, we find no correspondent conviction; and before and beyond which we must search for the point of divergence of these different systems. Our real clew must be found in the principles of human nature that give rise to Church and State,—Religion and Government;—principles, of which all historical precedents, and even Christianity itself, as a *received* faith and source of social phenomena, are but the results; and without reference to which only a blind and empirical use can be made of the lessons of the past.

An origin has been sought for the social existence of man in the weakness of the isolated individual, and the necessity of union for purposes of self-defence. The manifest objections to this view, familiar as they have been made by the reasonings of Aristotle and Cicero against it, have not prevented its frequent reappearance.* A general preference, however, has been given to the theory which refers the formation of communities to the affectionate propensities of our race: and this account of the original social bond has received the sanction of Aristotle.† But it appears evident that the relation of mutual equality which would ensue from the mere sentiment of attachment (φιλία), and which

* See Say's "Cours Complet d'Economie Politique," p. 544; and Sismondi's "Fall of the Roman Empire," Chap. I. p. 2.

† Polit. III. i. 9.

Aristotle himself points out as its consequence, is not that which binds together the most elementary human societies. A principle of *subordination* seems essential even to the very idea of a group brought into permanent unity. This principle is to be found, we believe, in the characteristics of man as a *moral* being, and would be wholly absent if he were made up of animal instincts, adaptive understanding, and sympathetic affections. These characteristics are two: a self-consciousness with respect to the various principles of action which impel him, attended by an intuitive perception of their relative worth; and a causal power to act in accordance with this perception. The former is what is usually termed Conscience; the latter, Will. These attributes constituting the true human distinctions, he who manifests them in the highest degree is regarded as the most perfect man. Within the limits of our own consciousness, a higher principle of action cannot occur to us as practicable, while we are under solicitation from a lower, without our feeling its *right* over us; nor can we imagine the *effort* made to serve its bidding, without a secret "Well done!" Let the same things be suggested to us, not in the comparative view of our own impulses, but in noticing the men around us, and the same sentiments will arise. A being manifestly under the influence of principles higher than our own awakens our *reverence*, and obtains a recognized title to guide us: a being with evident force of resolve to execute, more unfailingly than ourselves, what is simply on our level, excites our *admiration*, and wins authority over us. The one is the representative of *Conscience*, the other of *Will*: the one has the spiritual attribute of nobler quality; the other, in greater quantity: the one attracts our aspiration, and is contemplated as something god-like; the other inclines us to obedience, and is owned as something kingly; the one becomes the occasion of religion; the other of government.

If, then, there were no inequalities of character among our race, the sentiments of worship and of allegiance

would remain undeveloped. But the co-existence in the same *family* of persons of different *ages* secures this felt inequality, and provides that every human being in turn shall live in the presence of those who are above him in both the attributes of manhood. The parent stands to the child in the place of God and King. It is this, indeed, which *makes* the proper *family*, in distinction from the *litter* and the *brood*. Were this all, however, the sentiments in question would never pass the mere inchoate state, or effect any wider and more enduring combinations; all populations would be composed, not of communities, but, like the Greenlanders and others, of families living in sight of one another. But as the child becomes the adult, the moral inequalities which had been furnished by difference of age are replaced by those which the varieties of natural genius and character supply. It is impossible for a number of human beings to be collected within reach of mutual influence without the appearance among them of some *highest* soul to be their Prophet, and some *bravest* soul to be their King: and around such a one,—in the former case, as a source of law for internal guidance, in the latter, of strength for external defence,—will gather the first truly social group. Without such centre of attraction, it does not seem that any equal and collateral sentiments, either of fear or friendship, which men might entertain *inter se*, could become sufficiently reflective or sufficiently extended to give rise to the primitive forms of association. It is then the common *looking up*, not the mutual *looking round*, that effects this end: and society and reverence begin together. It is conceivable that, for a while, a human object alone might engage this feeling; but soon it must rise and determine itself towards invisible powers. For the strongest human wills have yet a stronger, and after every triumph, vanish as transient effects: and the highest consciences have yet a higher, that they only serve; and while the noblest beings pass away, the binding law they lived to manifest continues still the same. Thus that which they made men venerate

becomes disengaged from their personality, and felt to be independent of the limitations of mortal existence: and the transcendent form of reverence arises which constitutes proper Religion. Now, for the first time, there is an invisible object of faith and homage distinct from the visible: the latter becomes simply *representative* of the former,—the embodiment of a sacred rule over human life;—not the divinity, but the shrine. The lawgiver and prophet, being now only the *medium* of faith, becomes the source of Church and State, as separate from Religion.

If such are the elementary forces from which a community would arise, one and the same germ contains the future growth of Church and State. There is nothing to prevent the *Lawgiver*, who defines and enforces recognized obligations,—and the *Prophet*, who awakens the sense of new ones,—from meeting in the same man; and until experience has exercised its analytical industry on the functions of human life, this will actually be the case. The two characters were united in Moses, in Pythagoras, in Mahomet: and all societies which either are actually traceable to the spontaneous principles of combination in their smplest state, or have ascended to these in theory, and been deliberately constructed upon them, have possessed a theocratic character, and expressed the whole *conscience* of their members. Nay, in the conception which we naturally form of a *perfect* community, we unavoidably resume the same idea, and wholly sink the distinction between civil and ecclesiastical rule. In the imagination of a Messianic kingdom which occupied the Hebrew mind,—in the expectation of a Millennial reign, which engages the thoughts of many Christians,—in the faith which all disciples have of a society of the immortal good beyond the reach of death,—a perfect coalescence takes place between the ideas of Religion and Government, and the rule of a Divine Law over reverencing natures absorbs the functions of them both. If only *one* association existed in the world, so as to be wholly intent on its *internal* regulation, and if the two

qualities of higher conscience and of stronger will were always combined in its leaders, this union of the elements of Church and State would never be dissolved. But these are not the actual conditions under which we live. A community falls into *foreign* collisions and disputes; *military* qualities,—rarely found in the prophetic type of man, and implying a predominance of force of will over loftiness of conscience,—become indispensable; the hero most able to head the business of self-defence and aggression acquires a temporary pre-eminence: and different functionaries now represent the moral law and the resolute strength of the society. The effects of this loss of isolation and assumption of *external* relations all tend to widen the separation of Church and State. Conquest is made; new territory is taken, partitioned, and occupied: the direction of this work devolves on the victorious leader, apart from the earlier governors left at home. Hence he obtains *kingly rights* over the fresh acquisitions; and to guard these rights, to modify, to interpret them, a special body of rules and officers becomes necessary, constituting a different system from that which before had managed all common affairs. Of this system, the title to personal possession and the preservation of contracts of service and tenancy would manifestly form the chief objects, as between the members of the victorious people. Growing up by a recognized authority among themselves, it would still not lose the *moral* character hitherto felt to belong to all rule, and would be acknowledged as binding on them in a higher sense than that it was their interest to submit. In other words, the new code, though proceeding from their State-power, not from their Church-power, would still form part of their *religion*. With the subjugated tribe it is different. In relation to them, conquest gives rise to a system of *coercive* law, to which there is nothing answering in their conscience. It is invested with no sacred character, and is long obeyed under protest and with reluctance. Hence arises a great part of the penal legislation of a country: and, connecting

this consideration with the preceding, we see why the State officers—representatives of *kingly* rights—take cognizance of offences against public authority and private property; while the Church courts long retain the cases of primitive difficulty and injury between human beings, and settle the domestic questions of divorce, paternal right, and inheritance.

Besides these general causes, involved in the assumption of external relations by a community, certain special agencies connected with the historical development of Christian institutions have forced asunder the associate ideas of Church and State. During the first century of our era, the disciples not only held a new religion, but constituted a new polity. Their monotheistic earnestness was alone sufficient to prevent their having recourse to the legal system of franchises and protection afforded by a Pagan government, especially under a sway which no longer left to any of its subjects a history to boast or a country to serve. Add to this the expectation of a speedy return of Christ to reign over them, the feeling of allegiance to him, the sense of fellow-citizenship with each other, and total alienation from the world about to perish; and it can no longer excite surprise that they organized a distinct republic, and secretly withdrew their civil as well as their religious life within the precincts of their own association. Meanwhile, the Empire continued, and its law nominally regulated the political affairs and the temple worship of all civilized lands. When Constantine, therefore, embraced the new faith, he was himself at the head of a Pagan system of Church and State: he found coexisting a Christian system performing also the functions of Church and State: with this he formed an alliance, dropping the Church element of the Pagan scheme, appropriating the State element of the Christian, but leaving without much interference its ecclesiastical offices. Thus two social mechanisms, long independent, and even antagonistic, recognized each other: instead of either absorbing the other, they

entered into compromise and partnership; and the false distinction between secular and spiritual things became established. The subsequent dissolution of the Empire confirmed and widened this distinction. One temporal sword no longer held sway over the whole geographical extension of the faith: but while Christendom retained its unity, new centres of political government were everywhere forming themselves, and creating distinct social systems; the incipient promise of modern European nations. Provinces had long established their independent sovereignty, before the ecclesiastical power ceased to be Catholic; and even the mere partnership of Constantine's creation was destroyed by the vicissitudes which caused the dismemberment of the Empire to precede the disruption of the Church.

It is evident also that the growth of sacerdotal doctrine could not but contribute to the same end. Not that this would deny to the Church any of the proper powers of the State. But not even the genius of a Gregory could reduce the world to an avowed theocracy. And, failing this, Priesthood takes the other course, and denies to the State the powers of the Church; claims supernatural offices which no human governor may touch, yet without which all other ordering of life is vain; and thus goes apart from the system which it cannot appropriate and absorb. The Catholic doctrine, it is true, maintains an accord, to some extent, between the civil and ecclesiastical powers as to their *ends;* both are to secure obedience to the moral law of God. But the one is an earthly, the other a divine instrument, for this end; and till the sceptre is content to do the bidding of the crosier, it is but the emblem of an agency unaccepted and unblessed.

But of all the causes tending to detach from each other the ideas of Church and State, none has had so powerful an operation as the Lutheran tenet of Justification by faith. It represents Christianity as entirely annulling all Law, and substituting a principle at variance with any

lingering consciousness of its dictates. It treats the whole system of feelings connected with the moral sense,—the scrupulous care, the self-denying resolve, the binding pressure of duty, the recoil from retributory justice,—as the characteristic marks of an unregenerate mind: and regards the extinction of all these in a sentiment of reliance on the sacrifice of Calvary, as a necessary act of Christian self-renunciation, fulfilling the one great end of Revelation. Now the State subsists wholly on the natural sense of obligation: according to the Lutheran view, the Church subsists wholly to supplant it. The State proclaims the supremacy of Law; the Church, its abrogation. The State relies on the hopes and fears of responsible beings; the Church triumphs in their annihilation. Thus the two institutions aim at ends directly contradictory: the conditions of mind which they severally seek to produce in a people cannot co-exist; and every individual successfully ruled by the one is detained or reclaimed from the other. The State, in short, belongs wholly to the system of unconverted human nature and a perishing world: and is the positive opposite of the Church, which, by agencies beyond the compass of our will, gathers out of that world an emancipated community of saints. This doctrine is the true source of the modern notion of a "separation of Church and State": and in proportion to their earnestness in its adoption do English sects distinguish themselves in the agitation of which this phrase is the symbol. The strength of Voluntaryism lies in the belief that the ends of Christianity are not moral ends.

From this brief account of the disturbances which have interrupted the original partnership between the two elementary powers of society, some augury may be collected as to their possible re-approximation. We have found them drawn into contrast with each other by *historical* differences of *origin* in their present form; by *doctrinal* differences as to their *ends*; and *practical* differences as to their *means*. The effects arising from the first of these

may fairly be expected to wear out. The accidental conditions under which Christian institutions on the one hand, and the political arrangements of modern Europe on the other, developed themselves into their present form, offer now but the mere inert resistance of custom to the permanent force of natural human sentiment: and must insensibly yield up their influence to the new social tendencies in which that sentiment will ever re-assert itself. Then, the doctrinal schemes by which the *ends* of Church and State have been brought into contrariety, either as to their nature or as to their extent, are, in our estimation, false. Neither have the sacerdotal claims which would add a supernatural function to the moral duties of the Church, any foundation in Christianity: nor is the Lutheran disregard of Law, which would withdraw from the Church the moral aims of the State, any thing but the exaggeration of a truth which leads to no such consequence. There remains, as the only real and essential distinction between the two institutions, a practical difference in their *means*. *Coercion* must be habitually employed by the civil society against the violator of its laws, irrespectively of the offender's own sense of justice; by the religious society *never*. The only punishments it can invoke in this latter relation are such as may be in accordance with the pledged conscience of the transgressor, constituting an outward expression of his remorse, and partaking of the nature of *penance:* or else, they must amount to simple *expulsion*,—an act which may have no doubt a penal *effect*, but is intended as merely declaratory of a cessation of the bond of connection. The ground of this distinction is found in the very idea of the two associations. Both aim at the governance of life by moral law; but with this difference: the Church proceeds on the assurance that all men are conscious of that law; the State, on the observation that some men violate it. The Church assumes their anxiety to serve it; the State, their reluctance. The Church, looking round on the sphere of human temptation, speaks

out in the vow, "We will not"; the State, in the command, "Thou shalt not." The Church, therefore, from its very nature, relies upon the feeling of moral Reverence; the State, on the dread of Retribution. If all its proper purposes could be accomplished by the former, nothing would remain for the latter to achieve: but conscience failing to prevent evil in its spiritual beginnings, fear must interpose to arrest its external development. The State is thus the *dernier ressort* to the Church,—society's forlorn hope for the check of moral ills. And hence it is, that it *must never fail;* or else, being an expression of the community's strength of Will, it loses its *right*, no less than its might: while the Church, representing the common aspiration towards a perfection that cannot cease to be owned as divine, remains unimpaired through all failures.

It is obvious that the characteristic use of coercion by the State, though a peculiarity in the nature of its *means*, must introduce a limitation into the system of *ends* at which it aims. There is no human good, no element of social perfection, which it might not fitly attempt to realize, if there were reasonable hope of success. But wielding no instruments except the hope of public reward and the fear of public punishment, it is unable to reach the whole of life; and large provinces of duty must remain beyond its vigilance and control. Without attempting to draw any exact boundary around its proper realm,—which indeed must vary with the historical conditions by which it is environed,—it is clear that it can take cognizance only of external actions, susceptible of attestation; that it cannot regulate acts of simple prudence and imprudence; that, even of injuries, only those can be brought within its power which admit of definition, and of something like admeasurement, both as to their intent and as to their effects. Though, however, these limitations might be carried further, we altogether deny that they reduce the business of the State to the "protection of body and goods." We believe that a government which refuses to

attempt more will soon be unable to accomplish this: and that when it *seems* to move with success within these narrow bounds, the order of which it boasts is bequeathed from an age when it aspired to a nobler power, and is sustained by sentiments lingering from that better time. The superannuated village schoolmaster may retire into the dignity of village constable; and when he sees the decent habits, the quiet security, the neighbourly respect, prevailing in the place, not a cabbage stolen from the gardens, not a bit of washed linen threatened in the fields, the old man may indulge in complacent reflections on the potency of his office, and see in all this the terrors of his staff. He forgets that he taught the alphabet before he vindicated the law; that the men and women in the cottages were, a few years ago, the boys and girls on his old school-bench; that the kindly thoughts around him were born in the play-ground or the cricket-green; and that the reverent sense of Christian hope and duty, first awakened by his own serious voice, is the real guardian of the peace and order he admires. A State that, on the appointment of some philosophy more easy than wise, is in a condition to retire into official "protector of body and goods," must have had some more respectable occupation in its youth.

On the whole, we should say, as the general result of the previous reflections, that the CHURCH is that system of organized agencies by which men in society may be led towards compliance with *the whole moral law*, through *reverence:* and the STATE is that system of organized agencies by which men in society may be led to comply with *such parts of the moral law* as are *within the reach of public reward and punishment.* Besides the *Church proper*, including the arrangements (1.) for worship, (2.) for education, there are a number of *unorganized* agencies of the same class: they comprise the whole set of influences proceeding from higher minds upon lower, whether in domestic government; in the exercises of charity, in literature, or in social intercourse. And besides the *State*

proper, including (1.) the legislative, (2.) the judicial, (3.) the executive systems, there are also a number of *unorganized* agencies of the same class: they comprise the whole set of *prudential* motives, whether from physical pleasure and pain, from public opinion, or from expectation of future reward and punishment. It is evident, that if the Church, in this largest sense, were *perfect* in its action, the State functions would never come into existence, but always stand at zero: that if, on the other hand, the Church had *no* action, the State functions would become infinite, and cease to be possible: and that every success of the Church is a burden taken from the State. What then is the conclusion to be drawn as to the mutual relation of the two institutions? Manifestly this: since a *Society-in-State* has no ends of self-government, which the same *Society-in-Church* does not aim to anticipate and realize in a better way, *the former has the deepest interest in aiding the experiment of the latter.* In principle, then, we see no ground for denouncing the interposition of civil support on behalf of educational and religious institutions. If it be competent to the sovereign authority to spend the resources of the country in *punishing* wrong-doers, it seems perverse to say that the same authority may not engage itself in *preventing* their existence. Unfortunately, however, the abstract conclusion which we have stated lies at a vast distance from the practical questions which create the ecclesiastical controversies of the present day, and affords but an incipient clew to guide us through their intricacies. The State authorities may have the *right* to aid the Church; but suppose they cannot find it; that the national sources of Reverence lie among the unorganized agencies, and have deserted the visible ecclesiastical system; suppose that the citizens, unconscious of the devout sentiments which unite them at heart, are so sensitive about the formal beliefs which separate them in understanding, that a common recognition by the sovereign power threatens an implacable strife; suppose it impossible to gain assurance

that the thing aided *is* a Church and a *national* Church,—that is, does really inspire *reverence for the obligations of citizenship*;—what then is to be done? Can the right take effect? or, for want of the proper historical conditions, must it be inactive till better times? We shall not attempt to resolve these questions now; anxious, in tracing our path through the theory of Polity, to admit no disturbance from the sceptic laugh, and fanatic fears, and party rage, that confuse every entrance on its practice.

II.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.*

WE have often wondered that the English, the most sensible, but the most illogical of nations, should endure so patiently the intricacies and uncertainties of their law. That the careless and acute Athenian should frequent his city's courts, with keen relish for the subtlest pleadings by which sophistry could entangle justice, is in keeping with the characteristics of his vivacious and intellectual race. But the docile attention with which an English grazier or tea-dealer, apter to deal with things than with words, will listen to long arguments on forms of evidence and points of law, content no less to let the decision go by flaw than if taken on the merits, is a truly singular phenomenon. The man has no taste for verbal gymnastics; and fine distinctions, if he can see them at all, give him the headache. The fact is, however, he has an obtuse feeling that, through

* 1. "The Church, the Crown, and the State: their Junction or their Separation; considered in Two Sermons bearing reference to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council." By the Rev. W. J. E. Bennett, M.A., Perpetual Curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge. Third Edition. London. 1850.

2. "Lives of the English Saints." London. 1844, 1845, &c.

3. "The Temporalities of the Established Church, as they are, and as they might be." By William Beeston, an old Churchman. London. 1850.

4. "Religion, the Church, and the People; a Sermon."—By J. Hamilton Thom. London. 1849.—*Westminster Review*, 1850.

all this play of ingenuity, justice on the whole gets substantially done. Moreover, the mere legal quibbles are used as instruments of *escape*, not of condemnation, and fall in with his leanings to mercy. Once begin to confiscate the patrimonies of his neighbours by help of legal informalities, or to hang men by sophism, and he will give full proof of not only his love for real justice, but his aversion for logical semblance.

As it is with law, so with divinity. Give the English layman something like *right* on the whole, and he will not begrudge the lawyers an ample margin for the manœuvres of a questionable skill. Give him something like *truth* on the whole, by which he may guide himself and live, and he will indulge the divines with license of unlimited talk, and even look with reverent admiration on ponderous libraries written about his simple creed. He looks no further into theology than the demeanour of the parish clergyman. Let the vicar and his curate read the service impressively, preach no novelties, light no candles, look after the village schools, make themselves useful at the board of guardians, and keep the neighbours on pleasant terms with one another, and, for aught he cares, they may suit themselves with any doctrine between Whitgift and Grotius, Laud and Tillotson. He looks on the clerical eagerness about dogma as he does on his wife's gossip and voluminous correspondence,—as inherent in the genius of the class, and somehow related to the nice perception and voluble enthusiasm of which he himself feels the fascination. Only you must not ask him to take a part: his business-like habits are apt to bruise the graces; and his plain understanding rubs out all the fine distinctions of the creeds. He leaves these things to ecclesiastics, and with so free an indulgence that there is scarcely any intensity of bigotry and absurdity that may not have its way, provided he and his church are not positively committed to them. Folly and narrow-heartedness in one priest are counterbalanced by the wisdom and charity of another; the Calvinism of a Simeon by the Arminianism

of a Maltby; the sacramental doctrine of Pusey by the ethical theology of Arnold. The English are not a speculative people. And so long as they see such men as Whately, Thirlwall, and Sumner amicably seated on the same bench as Blomfield and Philpotts, no religious Churchman will miss there a representative of his faith, and the Established Church will gain the credit of being reasonably open to varieties of opinion. The decisions in the Articles may be stringent, the pretensions of the ordination-service arrogant, and the imprecations of the creed unflinching: but while they are not pressed into any visible form of ecclesiastical action, the persons of a few mild and charitable bishops suffice to counteract their effect, and to persuade men, fresh from the very sound of her anathemas, that they belong to the most liberal of churches.

Till within the last fifteen years, the English clergy have well understood the conditions on which this favourable interpretation of their system depends. They have not, indeed, always confined their controversies within friendly bounds; and an over-zealous bishop, like Dr. Marsh, might draw around his diocese a close cordon of eighty-seven questions for the exclusion of Calvinistic preachers. But they have kept these differences to themselves: they have not driven the secular bystander to take sides; they have, rather, relied on the inattention of the majority of laymen to dogmatic divinity; and, amid internal heart-burnings, have accepted compliments from neutral admirers, on the generous latitude which admits into one communion Parker and Burnet, Newton and Paley. For some time past, however, they have evinced more ingenuousness and less discretion; the boast of variety they have exchanged for pretensions to unity; the inconsistencies which constituted their strength they would wipe out as a reproach. The Anglican talks in high strain of the Catholic consent, as if he were not contradicted by the Bible-Society preacher in the next parish church. The Evangelical glorifies the

Lutheran Reformation, which his Tractarian neighbour denounces as an apostasy; and the communion to which they have both taken vows is praised by the one as the great ally, by the other as the appointed barrier, to the Protestantism of Europe. Both parties affect to be ignorant that the Church of England is the product of compromise, and, in its scheme of doctrine and usage, has been voted into its form of existence by the accidents of party and the confused action and reaction of opinion. They pretend that it is constructed around an "Idea": as well might you look for such a thing in a Parliamentary resolution, framed to catch votes. It is a dangerous employment to hunt for theories in a system of pacified discrepancies; for while such theories are sure to be mutually destructive, each necessarily insists on having the whole system to itself, and will let no lodgings under the same roof to its contradictory. Hence, differences, wide as those which rent Christendom asunder in the sixteenth century, coexist in the national Church; but coexist only till one class is strong enough to expel the other, or the nation provoked enough to silence both. It is now conspicuous, that the scope for various thought within our ecclesiastical pale is an involuntary merit. It is no result of a wise tolerance, but is openly treated as the vice of a lax discipline. The Bishop of Exeter leaves us in no doubt as to what the Church would be, if *he* might have the weeding of it; and could the past, as well as the present, be cited before courts under his inspiration, it is curious to think how her history and libraries, no less than her pulpits, would be thinned. The noblest lights of her literature would be put out. Had the Episcopal rules now contended for always prevailed, Barrow would have been known only by his lectures upon optics, and Samuel Clarke as an editor of Cæsar; Tillotson would not have preached at Lincoln's Inn, or Butler at the Rolls; no Cudworth would have mediated between heathen speculation and Christian faith; where the names of Berkeley and Cumberland stand, the

history of philosophy would have been blank; Erasmus would have found no biographer in Jortin, and Wallis no admirer in Whately: Lowth and Whitby, Paley and Coppleston,—in short, all men whom a mild and modest temper has disinclined towards extreme views, or a clear intellect disqualified for sacerdotal pretensions, would have been lost to the service or adornment of the Church. The question which the ecclesiastical parties of the day are now trying among themselves is, whether a stupid uniformity, impossible to genius and repulsive to scrupulous integrity, shall be forced upon the state religion. Momentous as that question is, it wakes up others far more ominous. The litigation in the Gorham case is on too large a scale, and in too curious a court, not to attract regards seldom directed to theological affairs. Men who doze through the sermon at their parish church are all attention at the rare chance of hearing dogma translated from the language of the pulpit into that of the bar. "Now, at least," they think, "we shall learn what all this is about. We shall get some notion what the schemes are between which we have to choose." We are much mistaken if the result has not been general among the educated laity, of utter disgust at *both;* of amazement to find themselves thrown back upon the scholastic jargon of the Middle Ages, and into the dreams of an unawakened civilization; of shame at the utter unreality, the emptiness, the cold distance from nature and life, of the tenets said to constitute the religion of this nation. Every Englishman has an interest in the Church which is intrusted with the highest culture of the people, and for that end has been endowed with resources unexampled among Protestant spiritual corporations; which monopolizes the Crown and the Universities; which is protected by the oaths of Parliament, and represented in the House of Peers; which distributes over the land an organized body of twelve thousand priests, whose primate is the highest of subjects, while her curates are in contact with the lowest; whose vicissitudes mingle everywhere with

the history of his country, and sometimes almost make it; and which still, in the eye of the world, represents the place which England is to hold in the ultimate retrospect on Christendom. In wading through the recent arguments of counsel on baptismal regeneration and prevenient grace, we could not help asking ourselves, "How will this whole scheme of doctrine look when gazed at from an historic distance,—like that from which we regard the banishment of Anaxagoras, or the trial of Socrates? When classed among the systems of human thought upon divine things, and thrown into the series in which are reviewed the myths of Plato, the ethics of Antoninus, the Immanent Cause of Spinoza, and the moral theology of Kant, what figure will this Religion of the English in the nineteenth century present?" The future historian of opinion will write of us in this strain:—"The people who spoke the language of Shakspeare were great in the constructive arts: the remains of their vast works evince an extraordinary power of combining and economizing labour: their colonies were spread over both hemispheres, and their industry penetrated to the remotest tribes: they knew how to subjugate nature and to govern men: but the weakness of their thought presented a strange contrast to the vigour of their arm; and though they were an earnest people, their conceptions of human life and its Divine Author seem to have been of the most puerile nature. Some orations have been handed down,—apparently delivered before one of their most dignified tribunals,—in which (as the notes to the last critical edition fully establish) the question is discussed, 'In what way the washing of new-born babies according to certain rules prevented God's hating them.' The curious feature is, that the discussion turns entirely upon the *manner* in which this wetting operated; and no doubt seems to have been entertained by disputants, judges, or audience, that, without it, a child or other person dying would fall into the hands of an angry Deity, and be kept alive for ever to be tortured in a burning cave. Now, all

researches into the contemporary institutions of the island show that its religion found its chief support among the classes possessing no mean station or culture, and that the education for the priesthood was the highest which the country afforded. This strange belief must be taken, therefore, as the measure, not of popular ignorance, but of the most intellectual faith. A philosophy and worhip embodying such a superstition can present nothing to reward the labour of research."

It is a mistake to suppose that tenets of this kind may be prudently let alone, as out of contact with the interests of this life: and to urge as a plea for indifference and silence that theories about the future may be left to be corrected by the future. On the contrary, there is no heavier incubus upon the present than false visions and untrustful fears. Ideal though they be, they are a heavier burden than unequal taxes and excessive toil. They depress the springs of hope, mar the simplicity of speech, set a police watch around the movements of thought, and drain off the natural joyousness of good hearts: and this, the paralysis of the person, is worse than the crippling of the lot. But their power will prove adequate to *both;* and only waits till emboldened by indulgence, to crown the possession of the invisible world with the conquests of the visible. Already the very superstition of which we have spoken exercises no despicable tyranny, and is constantly demanding more. For instance, we were recently present at the following scene. An artizan, who had an infant in dangerous illness, hastened to the nearest clergyman, and implored him to come and baptize the child. The clergyman, a person of more sense and kindness than orthodoxy, questioned him as to the grounds of so urgent a wish, and intimated that, in his view, the admonition of parents, rather than any mystic operation on the child, constituted the essence of the rite; so that, where the parental duties were about to be cancelled by death, he could scarcely feel that his ministrations would be in place. The man, thus encouraged to speak out, protested that neither he nor his

wife had the slightest faith in baptism. "But, then, Sir," he added, "our parson will never bury the poor child if she hasn't been sprinkled." We know this to be a case of constant occurrence. The clergy are habitually employed to perform a rite on whose efficacy no one present has the faintest reliance, and which is submitted to as a part of the funeral fee; and they are thus the occasion of surrounding the cradle of tenderest death with sullen unbelief and hypocrisy. The guilty pretence is not felt by the parents as a disgrace, since it is the appointed purchase of Christian interment for their child. The church has here ordained a struggle between veracity and affection; and who can wonder that her minister is used as the tool of falsehood, rather than endured as the agent of tyranny? In every direction the signs abound of a disposition, not only to retain, but to extend the pressure of Church ceremony and dogma upon public institutions and private life. What is the gist of the whole controversy between the National School Society and the Educational Committee of Privy Council about the management of parochial schools? There is no question here, as between sect and sect; for no one can belong to the governing board of such school without signing a solemn declaration that he is a *bonâ fide* member of the Church of England; but the National Society would revive the sacramental test, and compel him to 'qualify by taking the communion thrice in the year. There is no question about the character of the *religious* instruction to be given in the schools; for it is consigned to the clergymen of the parish, with a final reference to the diocesan, in case of any source of grievance or complaint; and it is imperative that, with the Holy Scriptures, the Liturgy and Catechism of the Established Church shall be taught; but the National Society requires that the Bishop should be at the last appeal on *all* school matters, secular as well as spiritual. In short, the Committee of Privy Council, as trustee of the Parliamentary grant, insists on a fair proportion of lay influence, of local administration, of secular

instruction: the National Society regards as a grievance every thing that threatens clerical ascendency, or raises mental culture into independent importance. Not to educate, but to restrain education within limits suitable to a faith in baptismal regeneration, is the almost avowed end; and this end is to be accomplished, if possible, at the public cost,—not out of ecclesiastical funds, but from the exchequer of a many-faithed and half-dissentient nation. If any one is simple enough to doubt the possibility of so monstrous a demand, his incredulity will be removed by the proceedings of a "meeting of the friends of national education on strictly Church principles," held at Willis's rooms, February 7th. On that occasion, Mr. Napier, M.P., expounded the duty of the State, with the peculiar mellifluous modesty which finds favour in ecclesiastical assemblies: that duty, he said, "resolved itself into the confiding to the accredited instruments of God the duty of bringing the minds of the children of God into harmony with his mind and his will." If these terms had less unction, they would have more sense. But we can hardly err in supposing that the "accredited instruments of God" are the gentlemen in holy orders; that by "his mind and his will" are meant "strictly Church principles": that "the children of God" are the youth of these realms. The speaker, therefore, intimating that "the question ought to be easy of settlement," requires that the whole education of the country be delivered over into the hands of the clergy. And this he affirms to be, "not preference for the Church, but justice"; declaring the refusal of it by the Privy Council to be "an attempt to exclude God from the Government of the world; to separate Providence from man; to set up the wisdom of man against God's truth." Is any one so ill-read in ecclesiastical history as not to know the savour of this language? The tact of our forefathers discovered that a cardinal's fit of humility, and tears of unusual pathos from the servant of all, were the sure prelude to some high audacity of the triple crown: and the tone of aggrieved innocence in a

church is the common disguise of meditated usurpation. The resolution which immediately follows Mr. Napier's demand of "justice to the Church," throws a further light upon the meaning of this plaintive phraseology. It prefers against the educational Committee of Council the complaint, that they "*have in their corporate capacity no definite creed*," but encourage indiscriminately various and conflicting forms of belief." And, in urging this complaint, Mr. G. A. Denison ingeniously states the only remedy which the ecclesiastical conscience can accept :—

"The greatest danger of all was the practical negation of definite truth which was found so largely in the Church itself, from that spirit of compromise which led men, for the sake of what they erroneously called peace, to fritter away the objective truth of God; from that sickly sentiment which made men shrink from unfurling the banner of God, because on that banner were written the awful words, 'This is the catholic faith, which unless man believes he cannot be saved.' The effects of this spirit of negation and of compromise were not far to seek. The question of education had been, from the first, between the maintenance or the surrender of the creed and doctrines of the church catholic, and of the catechism of the Church of England. All education flowed from, and necessarily depended upon, the doctrine of regeneration in baptism,—that doctrine which has so monstrously been of late made the subject of appeal to a court not necessarily composed of churchmen, and having necessarily no spiritual character."

The State, then, acting through the Committee of Council, does wrong,—a wrong to the Church,—in "encouraging various and conflicting forms of belief." The "encouragement," however, consists simply in letting them alone; in setting up no inquisition into the orthodoxy of the voluntary schools to which it renders aid; in not forcing Jewish infants to learn the Sermon on the Mount, Presbyterian teachers to inculcate episcopal succession, Socinians to profess the Athanasian Creed, and Quakers to take the Eucharist. The crime of the government,—the injury it inflicts upon the Church,—is in allowing these heretics to

teach any thing at all: they should be wholly ignored; made to pay for the instruction of their neighbours' children—perhaps their own—in what is abominable in their eyes; but be left to their native darkness, until they repent of the error of their ways. Poor, injured Church! Was there ever a harder case? Was ever innocence so buffeted? How can she discharge her commission on these terms? They are nothing less than an Egyptian cruelty, demanding bricks and withholding straw. Is she not intrusted with the sacraments, without which there is no salvation? And how *can* she dispense these, and indulge her mercy for imperilled souls, if deluded parents are allowed to exercise a vain self-will, and train their children in the fatal errors of an unbaptized intelligence? How can she be faithful, if sectaries, whom she is bound to treat as aliens and pity as apostates, are to be admitted as subjects equal under the law?—if she is to be responsible to infidel or schismatical legislators and their latitudinarian commissions?—if she is not to feel herself above the people's will in her use of the people's money, and meet no rival to undo her work in dispensing this world's goods for another world's blessings? It is not possible to mistake the tendency of all this lamentation. The plaintiff of this class would be thankful for a discriminating earthquake, that should swallow up, without fault of his, all people who frequent mass-houses and conventicles, and get rid of all difficulty, by rounding off the nation into the old ecclesiastical integrity, paring away the ravelled edges of dissent, and leaving the Church smooth and trim as a texture selvedged every way. Nay, he must be the most illogical of men, if he would not contribute, by a free use of direct persecution, to the same result. If the State is bound to help only the true Church, is it not bound to hinder the false ones? Why mulct the dissenter's pocket on behalf of God's truth, and leave his person free to propagate a lie? If, according to the doctrine of the Anglican clergy and the French police, "the duty of every government is to combat false ideas, and to direct those which are

true by placing itself boldly at the head of them,"*—it is folly to go one-armed into the combat, brandishing a left-handed encouragement, and letting the heavy fist of repression hang down as if under the spell of palsy. Unless it can be shown—and assuredly it cannot—that the sword and the rack are ineffectual for the eradication of sects, the same obligation which pledges the public treasure pledges no less the penal law to the "definite creed" of the government "in its corporate capacity." Nor could we ever see any reason, on "Church principles," for squeamishness upon the matter. Eternal consequences must override all the lesser humanities. You make no scruple about shooting a score of mutineers to prevent the disorganization of an army: why hesitate to burn up a small sect, to stop the perdition of a people? To believe in the necessity of baptism, we are told, is "fundamentally vital to salvation"; and hence "all education must flow from this doctrine, and the State is bound to have it taught to the people. But if salvation includes among its conditions a *belief* in the rite's necessity, much more must it involve, as an inner nucleus of essentiality, the *actual rite* itself; and the government which is to sanction only baptismal teaching must *à fortiori* tolerate only baptismal practice. It is absurd to enforce the doctrine and not secure the thing. Then why not provide a State font at every market cross, and baptize under inspection of the police? Why not enact penalties against the "pretended holy orders" of dissenters, by which a spurious and ineffectual imitation of the divine charm is palmed off upon simple people? You punish quacks who destroy life by giving medicines which they know not how to handle: why not put away heretics who ruin souls by administering a rite that turns from a sacrament to a poison in their hands? To allow the self-will of *parents* any voice in the matter is the mere imbecility of false indulgence. It has for ages been held, that a father has no power against the *life* of his children; it is now generally acknowledged, that

* See the Proclamation of M. Carlier, Police Minister, Feb. 10.

he must not be at liberty to suppress their *intelligence;* and shall we leave to him the right to sequestrate their *salvation?* To limit by penal law the minor excesses of the *patria potestas*, and refuse a like protection against this most tremendous injury, is the grossest inconsistency; and it should be made the duty of the detective force to ferret out every unbaptized child, and take him to the nearest successor of the Apostles. These consequences of the "strictly Church principle" are so obvious, that, if they are not openly mentioned, it can scarcely be that they are yet undiscerned. At all events, if our Anglican clergy make no immediate proposal to revive the penal laws, it is not for want of premisses suitable for its defence; the requisite logic is ready at a moment's notice, and only slumbers within the theory till the dawn of some reactionary crisis favours its waking into activity.

It appears to be shocking in the eyes of our spiritual guides that any one but themselves should look into the doctrines which they inculcate,—discuss them,—do anything with them but believe them. Holy hands are lifted up in horror when such mysteries are approached by the gaze of a layman's uncommissioned mind; and a divine patent is claimed not only for dispensing, but for discerning sacred truth. That men like Lord Campbell, accustomed only to the rules of profane evidence, should exercise their judicial understanding upon a sacramental proposition, affects the perpetual curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, with lively consternation:—

"At this very instant, one of the vital doctrines of our faith is being *judged*,—is being *called in question*,—is being *argued and debated about*, as though it had not been the creed of the Catholic Church, known and witnessed to from the Apostles downwards. It is being argued, and is to be judged, by those who, in good truth, cannot by the laws of Christ sit in judgment at all, seeing the laws of Christ have given them no such power.

"How can *they* judge of Christ's doctrine, who have had no *commission* from *Christ?*

"How can they judge of what is TRUTH, to whom the word of truth has not been committed?

"How can *they* take upon themselves, even for a moment, to let the question move past them, *as a question*, who know not that the FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIANITY lies in the doctrine which they dare to handle?

"It is an awful thing even to be, as we are now, for months in suspense as to what the State may pronounce about a doctrine which is fundamentally vital to salvation.

"It is an awful thing to see men of a mere temporal power dive into the mysteries of the deep things of the Spirit.

"It is an awful thing to see the men of Cæsar,—as of Cæsar,—plunge so recklessly, and with such utter confusion, into the things of God."—p. 16.

This sacerdotal arrogance might be permitted to have its way, and spend itself against the energies of the age, if it were the outpouring of some private sect, delivered from the pulpit of an oratory, or flattering to the owners of an Ebenezer. The visions of Swedenborg, the pretensions of Poughkeepsie seers, and the Mormon inspirations of Joe Smith the prophet, may be left without remonstrance to try their strength upon the ignorance of the age or on the permanent tendencies to psychological illusion. And if any number of Oxford graduates, whose heads have been turned with ecclesiology, are convinced that they hold the power of the keys, and if, by the combined force of bad arguments and good works, they can induce country gentlemen and suburban shopkeepers to employ them, *at their own charges*, in opening and shutting the kingdom of heaven, no one would have the least title to complain. But when this sort of profession occupies the parish church and claims the parish school, when it lives upon the farmer's tithe, and grows on chapter lands, and thrives with bishops' rents, its proud repulse to lay investigation becomes ridiculous. It is open to criticism, not from the controversialist only, but from the politician. While every theology is exposed to the question, Is it true? a State Church theology is liable to the more practical inquiry, Is it

adapted to the condition of the national mind? Does it express this people's noblest thought and purest aspiration? Does it stand in sympathy with their common affections, yet above their highest culture?' These questions a government is *bound* to ask, and public men to urge; and a Church that cannot answer them in good affirmatives, or that will not condescend to answer them at all, is disqualified for longer occupancy of the national endowment. A priesthood which, asserting a Divine commission, cannot submit to any lower question than '*Is it* true?' nor even to that, except from its own tribunals, so that question and answer shall both issue from itself, is, *ipso facto*, unfit for alliance with the State. The temporal powers must estimate the claim by a humbler rule: 'Does our nation *think* it true?' If the reply be negative, lament as we may the perversity of human nature, the Church is no better able to teach the people than if she were *not* infallible.

We are well aware that this is "low Erastianism": we know the kind of feeling with which such principles are regarded by divines like Mr. Bennett. The argument of his pamphlet, however, has done much to confirm us in their truth. He boldly denies any obligation on the part of the Church to accept or perform conditions imposed by the State; asserts, that it is unfettered by any civil engagements; is not bound, except as a matter of painful necessity, to recognize Parliament at all; and ought to have all the temporalities of an earthly establishment with the spiritual absoluteness of a heavenly hierarchy. The Church's alliance is not with the State, but with the Crown. These positions are made to rest entirely on the arbitrary power of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, in whose reigns the Anglican Church was constituted, and on the then undeveloped state of our representative institutions. At the time of the Reformation, and long after, Parliament was of no account: its very existence, as a power in the State, the Church at its formation never intended to recognize. The oath of supremacy was, and is, to the sovereign alone;

to the sovereign, moreover, not as constitutional head of the empire, but as ruling by divine right. Churchmen have "the high privilege and blessing of looking on him as our anointed terrestrial governor under Christ." "Thus the case stands as between the Church and the sovereign ruler; but between the Church and the State the question is entirely different. The sovereign exercises his office as coming from GOD,—the State as coming from MAN. The State is nothing more than an incorporation of a *legislative*, *judicial*, and *executive* power, appointed, regulated, and changing from time to time according to the constitution of a country, which in England depends on the will of the people, and is not in any way of *necessity* ecclesiastical." "While adhering to the one as God's appointed terrestrial governor, it might be severed from the other as being at enmity with God."—p. 7.

After this profession of anti-state-church loyalty, we had concluded that the "*anointed person*" might rely on Mr. Bennett's implicit obedience; while an heretical *Parliament*,—unless it stopped the mouth of its judicial committee,—would be in imminent danger of losing his services. What was our amazement to find, on the one hand, that, on the first sign in "God's terrestrial governor" of any deviation (as in James the Second's reign) from "true allegiance to the Church," he would disobey the crown (p. 10); and on the other, that, though his "conscience should be aggrieved" by "unjust law," and he should feel the time come to "obey God rather than man," he could never think of resigning his pastoral office on that account; it would be far too cruel to "the little ones in Christ,"—"the POOR,"—whose "faith hangs on *his*; whose dutifulness and adherence to the Church depend on *his*." "He must not dissolve that bond that was made for him by the Holy Ghost *lightly*." He must think that it is "the HIRELING only that fleeth, because he careth not for the sheep." He must anticipate the question which will be put to him at the great day,—"*Where is thy flock, thy beautiful flock?*"

(p. 32.) And so, with a bleeding conscience, in a Church bereft of catholic truth, the preacher proposes to remain "*Perpetual* Curate of St. Paul's, Knightsbridge."

If, however, he abides by the flock, and acquiesces in Parliamentary law, it is more than could fairly be expected, and must not be misinterpreted. The Church entered into its engagements in the time of the Tudors, and has nothing to do with any of the follies which society may have committed since. Cranmer having had no notion of the Reform Bill, the clergy are not bound to recognize the existing legislature; and Queen Victoria is to them only a perpetuation of Henry the Eighth.

"In regard to this point, *i.e., that in the reign of Henry the Eighth the whole power of the State resided virtually in the person of the sovereign*, it must be evident that the Church, though she embraced (in consideration of an anointed king, set over her in the Lord) the idea of obedience to him personally under Christ, she never contemplated the possibility of the present form of government, by which the sovereign personally is of no power whatsoever.

"Henry the Eighth, and the sovereigns succeeding him, were absolute and despotic; and their own will was sufficient argument for acts of power, however arbitrary. Their ministers and their Parliaments were mere shadows. They had none of that constitutional strength, by the voice of the people, which now makes them irresistible. By the abdication of James the Second, and the introduction of a new family upon the throne, opportunity was taken to break down this despotic power of the Tudor and Stuart kings. Acts were passed in the reign of William the Third, limiting and defining the royal prerogative. From that time,—the democratic power gradually increasing, and the constitution, in every change, becoming more of the people and less of the sovereign,—now it has come to pass that all real government and power is lodged, not in the crown, but in the prime minister,—that officer of the State becoming so, virtually, by the voice of the people. So that now, as in practice we know it is, the Church is governed, not as the Church promised she would be governed, by the anointed of the Lord, but by the voice of

some accidental person, whomsoever the convulsions of politics may from time to time cast up into the seat of power."—p. 23.

Now, what would be thought of any other corporation, not ecclesiastical, that should reason in this way, and not only plead its charter against Parliament, but contend that the royal control can only be exercised according to the forms and offices of the sixteenth century? Besides, the more absolute the monarch to whom the Church pledged her obedience, the less questionable his right to delegate his powers to whom he will, and distribute to Parliament a share of the prerogative once centred in him. And how stands the historical fact, as to the alleged submission of the Church to the mere person of the sovereign? The preamble to the "Act (1st Elizabeth) for the uniformity of common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments," runs thus:—

"When, at the death of our late Sovereign Lord King Edward the Sixth, there remained one uniform order of Common Service and Prayer, and of the Administration of Sacraments, Rites and Ceremonies, in the Church of England which was set forth in one book, intituled, 'The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of Sacraments, and other Rites and Ceremonies, in the Church of England,' *authorized by Act of Parliament* holden in the fifth and sixth years of our said late Sovereign Lord King Edward the Sixth, intituled, 'An Act for the Uniformity of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments,' the which was *repealed and taken away by Act of Parliament*, in the first year of the reign of our late Sovereign and Lady Queen Mary, to the great decay of the due honour of God, and discomfort to the professors of the truth of Christ's Religion;

"Be it therefore enacted by the *authority of this present Parliament*," &c.

If the unqualified subservience of the Tudor Parliaments to the royal will be urged against such early evidence, we have only to come down to a later period,—a period disgraceful indeed in many ways, but not without adequate

memory and experience of Parliamentary power; and in the 14th of Charles the Second we have a similar wording in the Bartholomew act of Uniformity:—

"Be it enacted by the King's most excellent Majesty, *by the advice and with the consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and of the Commons in this present Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same,* that all and singular ministers in any Cathedral, collegiate, or parish church or chapel, or other place of public worship within this realm of England, Dominion of Wales, and Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed, shall be bound to say and use the Morning Prayer, Evening Prayer, Celebration and Administration of both the Sacraments, and all other the Public and Common Prayer, in such order and form as is mentioned in the said book, annexed and joined this present Act, and intituled, 'The Book of Common Prayer, and Administration of the Sacraments,'" &c.

Here is an act of Parliament, under which the prayers are weekly read, and the sacraments administered throughout all England; which introduced alterations on the previous forms; which ordained the severest penalties against recusant clergymen; and, by enforcement of such penalties, vacated about two thousand livings, and created the body of Dissenters. Yet the Church, we are told, ought to hold on its way in sublime unconsciousness of a House of Commons; conniving perhaps, occasionally, at its existence, and using, for clerical purposes, "*the disagreeable truth*," that "the real seat of power" lies there; but always prepared to fall back upon divine right, and disown the constitutional state as a vulgar innovation. Mr. Bennett himself, in seeking redress for what he is pleased to call "the religious disabilities of the Church of England," does not deign to speak to the High Court of Parliament. He petitions her Majesty in person, and prays *her* to take in hand this disagreeable business of dealing with the Houses. And what is the message with which he would send her Majesty down to St. Stephen's on his behalf? Why, to tell the Peers and the Commons, that they, "being

no longer the Church, but having the Church under their dominion, *must be demanded to forego that dominion as being an unrighteous usurpation!*" (p. 27.) A pleasant errand to "the real seat of power"!

It is a strange infatuation to imagine that Englishmen will ever recognize in their Church an independent, self-governing, immutable body, exempt from constitutional restraints, and shielded from those changes which the progress of knowledge and the vicissitudes of thought introduce everywhere else. They are not in general very well read in the history of their country; but every boy from the upper classes of a British or National school knows enough of the course of ecclesiastical affairs during the last three centuries to make the pretensions of the Anglican priests to catholic unity appear preposterous. Moreover, a claim that might pass without challenge when all the religion of the land was centred in one communion, becomes not only offensive, but intrinsically incredible, when the characteristics of a devout mind, and the faithfulness of the Christian life, present themselves without visible distinction in numerous churches. A citizen of a large town can wander every Sunday into the chapel to hear mass, or into the Friends' meeting-house to keep silence, or into the Wesleyan, or Independent, or Unitarian chapel, to hear in each a different doctrine of nature and of grace, expounded perhaps in a manner quite as edifying as the rector's. How can you persuade that man that Christ has only one church in England?—that the rector is distinguished from all these people, as a divine messenger from a set of impostors?—that he is appointed to open and shut the heavenly kingdom, while they are set for a delusion and a snare? If you should provoke his sense of justice by this style of talk, does he not know that Parliament, which once put the Roman Catholics out of the parish churches, could put any of these sects *in*?—or could leave each parish as free to choose its ministers as its church-wardens?—or could repeal the Act of Uniformity, which deprives the clergyman

of all power to vary the worship according to his own state of mind, or that of his parishioners? A people that have found a new shape for their Parliament will not believe their Church inflexible. The clergy, who apparently cannot distinguish between the permanence of objective truth and the mutability of representative forms and dogmas, will probably wait for the painful lessons of experience. But other classes, startled by the reappearance of doctrines worthy of the age of Laud, and discussions in the style of Peter Lombard, are meditating the question whether the Church is really fulfilling the understood conditions of an establishment. This question, as now entertained, goes much further, we are convinced, than it ever did before. It is not a mere doubt about patronage and the sale of presentations, though *that* is a thing odious to common sense and natural piety: it is not a scruple as to pluralities, though custom only can grow tolerant of the abuse: it is not an objection to the incomes of the bishops, though they *do* seem to detach the apostolic function from the apostolic lot: it is not a discontent with the monopoly of the Universities, galling as that is to the intellectual aspirations of dissent: it is not a pity for poor curates, or an aversion to ecclesiastical courts, but the far deeper question whether *that which the Church teaches* can truly be called the *religion of this nation.* Its theory of life, its picture of human nature and representations of the divine, its ideal of moral perfection, its demands on intellectual assent,—are they in agreement with the living faith, the noblest inspirations, the clearest knowledge, and the true heart-worship of the present English people? Or must it be said, that what is held true by the best-informed rouses the frightened ecclesiastic instinct; that what the devoutest believe is not written in the creed; that what the purest and richest souls admire breathes through no appointed prayer; and that, in the real doubts and strife of their existence, men betake themselves to other thoughts than the curate's common-place?

Recent events, we believe, have awakened thousands to

the consciousness of an alarming interval between the dogmatic system of the Church and the living spirit of the time; and for one who refers this to the degeneracy of the age, there are a hundred who regard it as a superannuation of the Church. Unhappily, there is no simultaneous growth of confidence in any other denomination, and so the clergy, always debarred from ready access to doubting hearts, and seeing at present no swarm from their parish pews to the conventicle, are blind to the signs of the time. They will be the last to know how completely exceptional, among their hearers, is any genuine faith in the system of doctrine which they teach;—how many, with all the tastes and habits of conformity, are conscious of an active unbelief, and sigh after something of higher truth;—how many more rather suffer the service to pass before them and graze the surface of their minds, than take it up as any expression of the depth and intensity of their nature. The patience of the English race, the endowments of the English Church, and the respectable character of the English clergy, only mask for a while the fact, conspicuous in the rest of Europe, that the orthodoxy of the sixteenth century has worn itself out, and gives no adequate voice to the faith and piety of the present age. The very difficulty felt in dealing plainly with this subject,—the delicacy with which it is always handled,—the air of solemn respect with which public writers look at it, and pass by on the other side,—are evident indications that a blight of unreality has fallen on the national theology. A faith truly breathing and pulsating in the soul *cannot* thus hold itself back in interior congestion, leaving the external form of contemporary thought stately as marble and impassive as death; but will flow into a thousand significant varieties of natural language, and flush the frame and quicken the features with a free and flexible life. The reverence, the trust, the devout hope of a great people, can never fall into the artificial custody of a "religious public," or utter themselves only through the mouthpiece

of a separate "profession." Doctrines which cannot be gravely mentioned without incurring the imputation of cant,—which are distasteful, not chiefly to the vain and careless, but yet more to the thoughtful and earnest,—which no educated man, unless he be in orders, can defend without loss to his reputation, or attack with any gain to it,—which leave scarce a trace on the fiction, the philosophy, the poetry of the time, and would be silenced but for special organs which they have created for themselves,—which openly despair of their own future, unless they can coerce the popular education,—have manifestly lost their living hold upon the minds of men, and are not fit to represent the religion of the extant generation. On this point we shall discard all conventional fastidiousness, and plainly state *where* we think the Church theory of human life stands in hopeless contradiction to the wants, the affections, and the henceforth ineradicable persuasions of the human soul.

All men instinctively feel that it is the office of religion to draw them upwards by helping the tendencies of their purest veneration and their worthiest love, by embodying for them what they inwardly know to be holiest, and reminding them of what they feel to be best. The voice of prophet or of Saviour is ever a voice of sympathy and tenderness, the sympathy, indeed, of a higher nature, the tenderness of a diviner sphere; still, however, addressing them, not as strangers to whom the idiom of heaven is like an unknown tongue, but as kindred in unwilling exile, on whose forgetful yet unalienated love the dear domestic tones will fall as a music of restoration. If it speaks of fears, it is of fears whose shadow is already on the heart: if it denounces guilt, it is a guilt that sits invisible as a nightmare on men's dreams. It goes, in short, direct down into their consciousness, and deals with them as with congenial beings gifted with a sacred insight which they neglect to use. It professes to deposit no sanctity, like an incrustation of security, upon them; but elicits it from them, like colours of a native beauty created by the touch of light.

The Church theology makes no such appeal; talks to men, not of what they ought to know, but of what they cannot know; and makes its authority depend, not on its true interpretation of the oracles of living souls, but on the pedigree of manuscripts, the surmises of tradition, and the slippery chain of episcopal anointments. Its expounders assume a station outside the human, and profess (like the sophists) a wisdom beyond the apprehension of man,—*μείζω τινὰ ἢ κατ' ἄνθρωπον σοφίαν*,*—expecting no sympathy from the answering heart, but demanding obedience from the submissive mind. In their mismanagement,—as ever happens when prophecy is dead and priesthood lives,—Christianity becomes *a threat;* "if you do not use our magic and believe our mysteries, 'without doubt you shall perish everlastingly.'" Nor is this the accidental feature of some one school of theology; it is a common character in the teachings of Tractarian and of Evangelical, who may quarrel about the means of grace, but can shake hands over the eternal wrath. From this the whole economy which they profess to administer is nothing but a contrivance for escape. This is the fundamental postulate from which the whole scheme is developed, which dictates all its language and gives meaning to all its forms. The charming away of this infinite curse is the very problem which the Church proposes to solve, and which is held to justify her existence. She is not there to make good citizens and good men, to give sanctity to the laws of obligation, and hope to sorrow and pure affection; but distinctly to wash out of them a physical poison, and save them from the tortures of an inexhaustible vengeance. And this tremendous end she refuses to accomplish, except on conditions which the wisest may be unable to trust, and the most faithful may scruple to accept. For who can say that goodness may not doubt the sacraments which Clarkson and Elizabeth Fry disowned, and purity of heart reject the dogmas which Arnold and Channing never held? Either

* Plat. Apol. Socr. 20. D.

what the Church insists on as essential are *not* essentials, and her commission to dispense them comes to naught, or some of the best of men and most saintly of women are among the damned. We question whether any one, professing such a faith as this, is to be believed upon his own word. He professes a psychological impossibility. No man, who would himself hesitate to put Channing on the wheel, and object to burn Mrs. Fry, feeling that his reluctance comes of a good heart, can believe that God will do these things on a scale more terrible.

It requires, indeed, no great insight into character to discover that any reality in this eternal curse and penalty has for some time ceased. In proposing to rescue men from it, the Church makes an offer which no one cares to accept. Have our lay readers ever practically met with a person,—not under remorse for actual and heinous sin,—who wanted to be delivered from eternal torment? If ever a man does really apprehend such a thing for himself, and wring his hands and fix his eye in wild despair, how do we deal with him? Do we praise the clearness of his moral diagnosis and the logic of his orthodoxy? Do we refer him to the font for baptism, or the keys for absolution? No: we send him to the physician rather than the priest; we put cold sponges on his head, and bid his friends look after him. Nor does his doctrine any better bear application to the persons around us than to ourselves. If we sometimes act and speak by it, we never feel, and rarely think by it. Who ever knew a mother despair of her unbaptized and departed child? Let it only be considered *what* is the scene, what is the perspective, before her imagination, if she be at once sound and sincere in the faith; and it must be owned that even her most passionate grief never rises to the pitch of such piercing shrieks as she would hurl into the place of unutterable agony. The whole conduct and demeanour of the very persons who defend this doctrine afford the clearest proof that it is incredible. The late Dr. Hamilton, of Leeds,

wrote a book to prove that, beyond the little circle of choice believers, the universe is a vast torture chamber; and yet a merrier laugh, a more exuberant wit, a greater geniality, was rarely to be found. The professional hours of his life were spent, like those of some old painters, in colouring lurid pictures of his neighbours clutched by devils, and the world in general swallowing hot pitch; and for the rest of his time he was free to dine with the reprobates, and crack his jokes with the damned. No one, who seriously considers the intense inconsistency involved in such a life, can suppose that the theologian really held a faith which the grasp of a friendly hand and the welcome on a familiar face sufficed to dissipate. It is the same throughout the whole class of the sincerest and most faithful Christians. They delude themselves with the mere fancy and image of a belief. The death of a friend who departs from life in heresy affects them precisely in the same way as the loss of another whose creed was unimpeachable; while the theoretic difference is infinite, the practical is virtually nothing,—perhaps a sign of acquiescence in the clergyman's official compassion, or a faint desire that it had been otherwise; but not half the distress which had been felt when the same friend had broken his leg and lost his Pennsylvania dividends. What room, indeed, could there be for the business, the amusements, the contests of this world, if it reflected from every salient point the red light of so horrible a background? Who could spare any attention for the vicissitudes of cotton and the price of shares, for the merits of the last opera, and the bets upon the next election, if the actors in these things were really swinging in his eye over such a verge as he affects to see? We would ask any clergyman who reads the Athanasian Creed, How can you transact your daily affairs with any peace of mind? Your coat was made by a man who doubts the co-eternity; your grocer thinks the Holy Ghost created; you pay your rent to a landlord who confounds the persons; and your fishmonger divides the substance. If you found any of these with his

house on fire, you would not think it a time for prosecuting your business: you see him in a greater peril and you coolly inquire about sugars, or discuss the choice of salmon! The misfortune is, this doctrine is in some degree protected by its own monstrous character; which takes it so sheer out of all nature, that it can scarcely be confronted with reality. If we apply to it such tests of experience as would suffice in other cases, we produce results whose startling look distracts the attention from their logical consequentiality; and when we demand from men a life in simple accordance with their profession, the thing itself is so impossible that we are apt to seem unreasonable, and become charged with the very extravagance which we impute. It is, however, notorious that a large number, even of the clergy, are fully *conscious* of their unbelief in this doctrine; and among the educated laity the impression is general that no one, except here and there a dull curate or a pugnacious bishop, is sincere in his assent to it. Will it not, then, be got rid of? Not a bit: the instinct of ecclesiastical cohesion, and the passion for nominal unity, will outweigh all sense of human veracity and reverence for godly simplicity; and year after year, as sure as the Athanasian festivals come round, thousands of clergymen will solemnly profess before tens of thousands of assenting people, a creed which is false to the heart of all. Depend upon it the State will wake up to a sense of right and dignity in this matter before the Church; and the honour of politicians grow sensitive to the blot, while yet the conscience of divines could bear a longer shame.

Now, we need not undertake to decide whether the age be perverse, or the doctrines be false. We only say that there is an irreconcilable variance between them, and that a Church which represents the one does not exhibit the religion of the other. It is not just, however, to affirm that the modern recoil from the stringent forms of the old orthodoxy is the result of a light and audacious spirit. On the contrary, it manifestly springs, in a large class of cases, from a profound moral earnestness. They who are deeply

impressed with the problems of positive and personal sin are not likely to give much heed to the talk of a latent birth-sin; any more than, in the awful crisis of a fever, they would consult about the patient's chance of hereditary gout. It is the reality of evil, the living sense of moral conflict, which makes faithful men impatient of charms against a bad lineage, instead of help against a strong temptation: what care they for the loins of their parents, while the battle runs high between the better and the worse in their own souls? Nay, paradoxical as the assertion may appear, this deeper feeling of inward strife, which marks the age, renders it not *more* possible, but much *less*, to say much more about the *corruption* of human nature. It has ceased to be a theory, scholastically looked at from the outside; or a sentimental formula, dropping from the lips of nurse-maids jilted by their lovers, or squires robbed by their butlers. You must touch it with discrimination, for its meaning is known; and with its truth the truth also of its opposite has been discovered. It is impossible for a man to find his ill but by the perception of good; to explore his darkness, but by an eye of pure vision and a lamp of holy light: he cannot loathe the wrong without aspiring to the right, nor combat with fiends without the instinct of an angel. His self-consciousness necessarily reveals to him both halves of his nature at once, and disgusts him henceforth with all one-sided doctrines,—whether the Church whines to him about human depravity, or Socinianism repeats its platitudes on human dignity. The feeling of the present age demands, we are convinced, an observance of this just equilibrium: the dogma must adapt itself to the fulness and refinement of modern experience, or pass away as the fiction of a world half passionate and half monastic.

The interpretation which thoughtful and devout Churchmen have long put on the established forms of theological expression must be accepted. By the constitutional *corruption* of man they commonly understand no more than the openness to evil which is inseparable from a free

being—δύναμις of sin as opposed to its ἐνέργεια,—together with that constant lagging of the halting will behind the winged desires which humbles us to seek the help of God. This is no stain which faith can cleanse, or hands ordained to sprinkle wash away; but an integrant part of our nature,—its peril and its glory,—without which we could serve under the bondage of no law, and win the freedom of no gospel. And a meaning far different from the historical definition of divines is currently given to the word *salvation*,—a word, however, which, after every softening, is not sincerely congenial with the highest religion of the time. Its direct opposition to *damnation* is very much lost, and, instead of denoting mere rescue from a penal doom, it is accepted as an expression for personal *union with God*, spiritual *perfectness of character*; or, without reference to any penal alternative, the simple *attainment of a blessed and immortal state*. These changes are the inevitable results of more humane and more trustful thought, trying to embody itself in forms selected by a sterner and a coarser time. Let the Church be reconciled to them, and adopt them. Though they change the logical basis of its theology, they preserve whatever can endure in its religion. Nothing is more dangerous to faith, more surely fatal in the end, than to press with rigour the forms of dogma which have begun to bind and hurt the soul. Prove as you may that they would sit quite easy but for the perverse writhing and resistance within, the band has discovered itself to be unyielding, and from that instant it is the very function of life to take alarm, and either make it pliant or throw it off. It is as if you tried to argue back the alienated love of those who once were of one heart, but have diverged into uncongenial tastes and admirations. The more stringent your demonstration that they *ought* to feel as of old, the more impossible do you make it: your substantial failure is proportioned to your formal success. Religion, like poetry, is a life, a spirit, that must find its own forms by

development from within, and cannot be moulded by external constriction; and the larger freedom you have courage to allow, the less will you have to regret irregularity and distortion; for it has inherently a tendency to order and beauty, only determined, not by authoritative mechanism, but by the rhythm and symmetry of the affections themselves.

Every devout era has been marked by a free enthusiasm, unconscious of reluctant beliefs, or boldly disengaging itself from them. From such a time the descent to an age of dogmatic construction is deep; to that of dogmatic reconstruction, is final. From the period of St. Paul to that of Eusebius, what an infinite declension in every thing that should be dear to Christian man! In both, diversity of theology abounded: nor in intellectual conception of the objects of faith did the rival creeds of subsequent times stand in stronger contrast than the Judaic and Gentile Christianities, the doctrines of faith and works, the Logos and the Son-of-David theories of the Messiah, the Palestinian demonology and Alexandrine spiritualism, which lie harmoniously together within the compass of the New Testament itself. No greater difference separated Jerome and Rufinus, Theophilus and Chrysostom, Augustine and Pelagius, than is found between the theocratic doctrine of Mark's Gospel and the mystic depth of John's; or between James, the apostle of ethics, and St. Paul, the champion of faith. But the first age was inspired with intense affections; the other was withered up with dry contentions. In the one, Christianity was a breathing faith; in the other, a dialectic exercise. The one had a creative soul, the other a critical understanding; and while the former, rich in various populations, out of its differences produced unconscious theologies, the latter out of its theologies produced only conscious differences. Divisions without end, and passions without check, have been the invariable result of ecclesiastic legislation for unity and peace. It brings with it strong delusion and a corrupting poison into the clerical mind; bewildering its perception

of the proportions of things, and confounding the solemn and the frivolous; where mystery is deepest, raising highest the conceit of knowledge; where forbearance is most due, removing all restraints from anger; where penalty can least avail, applying it with cruellest force; substituting the pleader's arts for the disciple's simplicity, and the sophist's pride for the saint's meekness.

The organization of dogma is symptomatic of the dissolution of faith; it is an unwholesome mushroom growth from the rotting leaves now fallen from the tree of life. That blessed foliage feeds it, no doubt; only not from the vital sap, but from the juices of decay. It is bad enough that the Church should have inherited her chief formulas of belief from such an age and such a reign as that of Constantine; a reign hideous with guilt; an age so surrendered to depraved morals and misdirected intellect, that, if ever there could be in Christendom an incapacity for discerning spiritual truth, it must have been then. But to make such a time the rule for all others,—to dignify by the name of "the Catholic faith" the propositions which emerged from its wranglings, by outvoting or outreaching the rest; to scorn, in comparison, the light of recent thought, and constrain the modern Englishman to put back the index of his Christian consciousness to the hour when Athanasius triumphed,—is a weak rebellion against providential tendencies, and an irreligious scepticism of God's perpetual inspiration. If, by a liberal interpretation, or, better, a complete revision of the technical phraseology of doctrine, the bands of creed be not relaxed, the Church must either descend to the rank of a sect, or become a vast hypocrisy; pretending to unity, yet torn by divisions; representing the faith of the country, yet sheltering its unbelief; the symbol of piety, yet a storehouse of unveracity; the nominal head of all our culture, yet sworn to the words of an age that had none of it. How long will educated Englishmen bear patiently the injurious decree of ecclesiastics,—"You shall not be

religious, except on conditions impossible to the understanding"? It is notorious that the present time is prolific beyond all that have preceded it in honest varieties of devout belief; and for a Church pretending to the affections of such a time, and comprising among her honoured names Sewell and Milman, Hare and Close, to insist upon the inflexible standard of doctrine, presents a singular aspect of infatuation and insincerity.

The prevalent alienation from the stereotyped system of Church dogma is by no means confined, we believe, to the points on which we have touched. Men, we have said, do not want to be "saved" from an "eternal torment" which has no hold upon their faith; or to escape, by ritual exorcism, a congenital curse which frightens them no more. They do, however, want to be helped into a conscious peace with God, and a pure fidelity of life. Much as we hear from divines of the pride and self-righteousness which oppose the reception of their doctrines, and freely as we admit the operation of moral causes like these on the aptitudes for faith, we deny the general applicability of this imputation; and are prepared to vindicate the humility and devoutness of a large and increasing class of doubting and dissatisfied Churchmen. They are not less sensible than others of the delusions of heart and decrepitude of will, by which they fall away from the life to which they aspire, and in which alone they can be in harmony with God; and they have no higher wish than to find a mediator of this contradiction, and rise into the freedom of reconciled affections. But the mechanism provided for this end, in the dogmas of the Church, has lost its efficacy upon all the higher class of minds, and wields no longer any worthy power over the lower. The forensic scheme of vicarious atonement is too palpably at variance with the habitual moral sentiments of men, to command the old reverential assent; too manifestly conceived in the artificial style of legal fiction, to suit a people ever eager to ground themselves on some veracious reality. It is useless for the

preacher to treat the repugnance of reason and affection to this doctrine, as the sign of a graceless heart. His hearers know better, and are fully conscious that the protest comes not from their lower passions, but from their highest discernment; from indignation that the dealings of the Infinite should be described in the language of debtor and creditor, and the universe, as the theatre of responsible existence, be degraded into the likeness of a bankruptcy court. They feel, moreover, that to accept the offer of such a doctrine would be unworthy of a noble heart: for he who would not rather be damned than escape through the sufferings of innocence and sanctity is so far from the qualifications of a saint, that he has not even the magnanimity of Milton's fiends. We are spared, however, the necessity of stating the objections which we know to be widely felt to this doctrine, as it appears in the Church formulas; for the following remarks, by an orthodox clergyman, present them with a force and clearness that leave nothing to be desired. The writer divides the views prevalent upon this subject into two classes: the first representing the death of Christ as a *literal substitution* of evil endured, for evil that else would have to be endured; the other holding it as an *expression* of abhorrence to sin, made through the sufferings of one, in place of the same expression that was to be made by the suffering of many. In reference to the former class of representations, he says:—

"We may say, comprehensively, that they are capable, one and all, of no light in which they do not even offend some right moral sentiment of our being. Indeed, they raise up moral objections with such marvellous fecundity, that we can hardly state them as fast as they occur to us.

"Thus, if evil remitted must be repaid by an equivalent, what real economy is there in the transaction? What is effected save the transfer of penal evil from the guilty to the innocent? And if the great Redeemer, in the excess of his goodness, consents, freely offers himself to the Father, or to God, to receive the penal woes of the world in his own person,

what does it signify, when that offer is accepted, but that God will have his modicum of suffering somehow, if he lets the guilty go,—will yet satisfy himself out of the innocent? In which the divine government, instead of clearing itself, assumes the double ignominy, first, of letting the guilty go, and secondly, of accepting the sufferings of innocence! In which Calvin, seeing no difficulty, is still able to say, when arguing for Christ's three days in hell, 'it was requisite that he should feel the severity of the divine vengeance, in order to appease the wrath of God, and satisfy his justice.' I confess my inability to read this kind of language without a sensation of horror; for it is not the half-poetic, popular language of Scripture, but the cool, speculative language of theory, as concerned with the reason of God's penal distributions.

"And yet this objection is aggravated, if possible, by another representation, that Christ did not suffer willingly, or by consent, save in the sense that he obeyed the command by which it was laid upon him to suffer. Thus, a distinguished American writer, in his treatise on this subject, written only thirty years ago, says, 'The Father must command him to die, or the stroke would not be from his own hand,' carrying still the analogy of punishment so far as to suppose that, like all penal inflictions, Christ must die under 'authority' of God in order that his death should have any theologic value. It is of no moment to ask, in this connection, what becomes of the deity of the Son, when he is thus under the authority of the Father; for he is not merely under it, as being in the flesh, as the Scriptures speak, but it is 'authority' that sends him into the flesh. To profess the real and proper deity of Christ, in such a connection, is only to use words as instruments of self-deception. His deity, after all, is not believed, and cannot be where such a doctrine is held.

"Again, it is a fatal objection to this view, that it sets every transgressor before the law, when, as yet, there is nothing right in his character; producing, if we view it constructively, and not historically (for historic and speculative results do not always agree), the worst conceivable form of licentiousness. For if the terms of the law are satisfied, the transgressor has it for his right to go free, whether he forsake his transgressions or not. As far as any mere claims of law or justice are concerned, he may challenge impunity for all the wrongs he has com-

mitted, shall commit, or can commit while his breath remains!"*

In such trenchant manner does a Presbyterian divine, in a book written to defend the Trinitarian theology, deal with the favourite Evangelical topic. We do not profess, with our Bœotian apprehension of dogmatic subtleties, to perceive the essential distinction between the opinion thus criticized and what he calls "the second and more mitigated class of orthodox opinions," namely, those which make the efficacy of Christ's death consist, not in what it *is*, but in what it *expresses*. Between a substituted "punishment," and a substituted "expression of abhorrence for sin," we can find nothing but a verbal difference; seeing that only by being punishment would it express any thing against sin, or replace as a substitute, with equivalent functions, the great penal scene of the universe. We suppose, however, that a practised theological vision can detect some valid distinction where it evades the ordinary eyesight. Dr. Bushnell, while paying a higher respect to the second hypothesis, visits it, notwithstanding, with the following decisive judgment:—

"This latter seems to accord with the former view, in supposing that Christ suffers evil as evil, or as a penal visitation of God's justice, only doing it in a less painful degree; that is, suffering so much of evil as will suffice, considering the dignity of his person, to express the same amount of abhorrence to sin that would be expressed by the eternal punishment of all mankind. I confess my inability to see how an innocent being could ever be set, even for one moment, in an attitude of displeasure under God. If He could lay his frown for one moment on the soul of innocence and virtue, He must be no such being as I have loved and worshipped. Much less can I imagine that He should lay it on the head of one whose nature is itself coequal Deity. Does any one say that He will do it for public governmental reasons? No governmental reasons, I answer, can justify even the admission of innocence

* "God in Christ." Three Discourses, delivered at New Haven, Cambridge, and Andover, with a Preliminary Dissertation on Language. By Horace Bushnell. (Hartford, Connecticut, 1849.) p. 195.

into a participation of frowns and penal distributions. If consenting innocence says, 'Let the blow fall on me,' precisely there is it for a government to prove its justice, even to the point of sublimity; to reveal the essential, eternal, unmitigable distinction it holds between innocence and sin, by declaring that, as under law and its distributions, it is even impossible to suffer any commutation, any the least confusion of places.

"All the analogies invented or brought from actual history to clear the point are manifestly worthless. If Zaleucus, for example, instead of enforcing the statute against his son which required the destruction of both his eyes, thinks to satisfy the law by putting out one of his own eyes and one of his son's, he only practises a very unintelligent fraud upon the law, under pretext of a conscientiously literal enforcement of it. The statute did not require the loss of two eyes; if it had, the two eyes of a dog would have sufficed; but it required *the* two eyes of a criminal,—that he, as a wrongdoer, should be put into darkness. If the father had consented to have both his own eyes put out instead of his son's, it might have been very kind of him; but to speak of it as public justice, or as any proper vindication of law, would be impossible. The real truth signified would be, that Zaleucus loved public justice too little, in comparison with his exceeding fondness for his son, to let the law have its course; and yet, as if the law stood upon getting two eyes, apart from all justice, had too many scruples to release the sin, without losing the two eyes of the body, as before he had lost the eyes of his reason.

"According to the supposition, the problem here is to produce an expression of abhorrence to sin, through the sufferings of Christ, in place of another, through the sufferings of the guilty. Now the truth of the latter expression consists in the fact that there is an abhorrence in God to be expressed. But there is no such abhorrence in God towards Christ; and therefore, if the external expression of Christ's sufferings has no correspondent feeling to be expressed, where lies the truth of the expression? And if the frown of God lies upon his soul, as we often hear, in the garden and on the cross, how can the frown of God, falling on the soul of innocence, express any truth or any feeling of justice?"*

* See "Tracts for the Times," Nos. 80 and 87, especially Part V. sec. 3.

After such a verdict as this, pronounced by an orthodox divine, distinguished alike by genius and moderation, who can wonder at the aversion with which noble and cultivated minds recoil from the so-called "economy of salvation"? Of the feeling which its technical phraseology produces, the acute and refined Tractarian leaders are well aware; and one of their earliest aims was to withdraw this doctrine from open publication, under pretence that it was too sacred a mystery to be more than whispered in the sanctuary. If it was obtruded upon unprepared minds, it was said, it might be extremely dangerous; for the secret treasures of God were not always to be shown; a vain display of them before the eye of the unregenerate might have serious consequences; all holy things, in proportion as they were springs of life to the faithful, were of awful peril to the unprepared. Better would it be if the "stewards of the mysteries" would reserve this truth deeply in the shade, and adopt respecting it the "*disciplina arcani*." What could be more *covert* than our Lord's own dealing with it? Is it not a *latent* presence in his teachings, never prominently and explicitly declared? And it is ever most effectually impressed on others by silent implication, and the "instruction of a penitent and merciful demeanour," rather than by being "proclaimed, as it were, in the market-place," and opened to all indiscriminately.* Now, let it be remembered whence this curious pleading comes; and that all the writings of its class must be read shrewdly, like a paper from the foreign office; for the Tractarians, as God's ambassadors at the court of Human Nature, have introduced a most diplomatic spirit into the divinity propounded there: let this be remembered, and the real motive for converting the warmth of the atonement doctrine into a latent heat will not be far to seek. Left to radiate at large, it produced a shrinking of the mind, a withering sense of blight to the moral sentiments,

* Bushnell, p. 199.

which endangered the whole Church scheme; and if any lofty and tender souls were to be retained in allegiance to it at all, this dogma must be taken out of the mouth of popular declaimers, thrown back into secrecy, and committed to sacraments of solemn look and silent form.

In rebuking this Jesuitry, the Evangelical clergy have certainly all the honesty on their side. But in practising it, the Tractarians rightly interpret, we believe, the alienated feelings of a class of men, without whose sympathy and convictions no Church can remain rational, no theology respectable, and no religion above the taint of gross superstition. There is no way, however, of preserving or of recovering their sympathy, or any sympathy by which religion can profit, but by perfect simplicity and truth. No management, no suppression, can serve the end; the guilt and discredit of artifice are spent only in the purchase of failure. It is not by manœuvring people back into persuasions from which they have in heart emerged, but by urging the Church forward, to comprehend and interpret their ennobled affections, that the forfeited harmony can be restored. The shadow on the dial of history cannot be coaxed back. Lost positions in the movements of the human mind are never recovered, and in the oscillations of faith no reaction ever touches the old points and reproduces the same attitudes of thought. The same subjective tendency may undoubtedly recur after long sleep, but it finds a new set of objective conditions forbidding the re-creation of the past; as a south wind that has blown in spring may set in again with the late summer; but, as it falls on a different season, it will open a fresh set of flowers. No doubt the recoil from the Protestant disintegration of Churches has impressed upon the present age a Catholic aspiration; an admiration for the unity which we have lost. But this feeling is simply insulted by offering to its imitation the mediæval Romanism. Aspiration cannot imitate; it must create; and whatever unity may yet arise in Christendom will be

no less different from any thing we have yet known than the factory from the monastery, the locomotive from the packhorse, or the *Times* newspaper from the illuminated manuscript. Above all, fellowship must be sought, not by exclusion, but by inclusion; not by enforcement of dogma, but by sympathy of spirit; not by suppression of individuality, but by development of it, till its contrarieties drop away, and it yields up Catholicity of faith as a product of unity of nature. The "bond of the spirit" sufficed, without metaphysical definitions, for the disciples in the age of the Apostles; and every Church which fears to trust its guidance is self-convicted of being non-apostolic.

Perhaps the most positive divergence of the age from the Church is to be traced in their irreconcilable notions of what is best in human character. Their admirations are not simply different, but opposite. The life which appears noble and great to the mechanic, the merchant, the statesman, is unholy in sacerdotal eyes; the heroes of modern fiction and biography are unconsecrate according to the measure of theology; and against that which the newspaper praises the sermon lifts its voice. Nor is this discordance at all concurrent with the old quarrel between "flesh and spirit"; the low, self-seeking desires, and the reverent faithfulness of the human heart. It is an honest and an earnest difference in the moral tastes and standard of the devout ecclesiastic and the devout layman. If a Massillon or a Barrow denounced from the pulpit the corruptions of his age, the rake and the hypocrite who listened were either pricked in conscience at his words, or else aware of being too far gone for scruple and contrition. But the modern invectives against the world and its ways carry with them no piercing reproach: the state of mind extolled as spiritual is felt to be only ecclesiastical: it kindles no affection, rouses no sacred ambition; at best, it is only looked at from without as a quaint old picture, romantic to see on the dead wall of time, and no man is

eager to present himself in its likeness on the Exchange or at St. Stephen's. We have reached a time when the broad chasm between the Church and the world cannot be kept open; and we must have something to mediate between the natural conscience and the Christian life. The theory which entirely removes Christianity from contact and sympathy with the common springs of human action and movements of human affection,—which treats it as a supernatural grace induced from without,—necessarily creates a type of artificial and unmoral goodness, incapable of being sustained in the permanent admiration of mankind; and then the Church, while abandoning in despair, as a piece of doomed corruption, the real and living nature which to a pure culture would yield the noblest fruits, fails to impart any better inspiration.

Whoever persuades himself that, in the awards of another world, there are to be two grand classes, separated by all that can render contrast terrible, and that already, as they walk the streets, men bear upon them the sealing grace or the cursing brand, will not be content to see them look so like each other. He will ignore the visible lights and shades of genuine character, to dwell upon mystic and viewless distinctions. Religion is not equivalent with him to a pure mind and harmonious character, and may even tend to distort the conscience and misapply the energy of the will. It sets itself up, apart from morals, as a separate business, involving a distinct series of acts, and rather eclipsing all finite relations than glorifying them to infinitude. The heavenly frame of soul which must be sought is not simply the best and highest spirit applicable to the worldly work of the hour, but something above all worldly work; something that feels the very contact of such affairs as a mean distraction, and that aims to sit aloof from them in higher contemplations. The one thing needful in its estimate is, to keep up in the mind, in a state of vivid excitement, a certain limited set of thoughts and emotions, which are taken as signs of communion with the Spirit.

The great business of life is to perpetuate, not the unconscious influence, but the conscious presence, of these sentiments: whatever suffers, they must be watched, preserved, stimulated to greater intensity: everything is valued solely by its tendency to suggest these ideas, or to burnish them again when they have become dull within the heart. This is adopted as the test of right and wrong; and the most injudicious efforts of zeal are approved, if they do but deepen the essential sentiments: while no employment of the understanding can be so noble, no sympathy so pure, no pleasure so innocent, no duty so worthy of our humanity, as to escape condemnation, if it tend to withdraw the mind from its prescribed meditations, and melts its rigid catalepsy of thought. Hence the first place in the rank of obligations is given to acts of devotion; and the devotee lives that he may learn to pray, instead of praying that he may learn to live. The excitement of the Church becomes more welcome than the drudgery of the home: a higher relish is found in a transport than in a duty: the simple pleasures, the unpretending moralities, the secular utilities of life, let down the mind to a pitch too low for saintship; and those who cannot always be strung up to the spiritual point, but who are careful to do the duty that lies nearest to them; those who, by the spontaneity of a pure conscience, do good without a thought of self, and give the cup of cold water, not in order to be divinely meek, but in order to assuage a human suffering; those who refresh family and neighbours by the perennial flow of refreshing sympathies, without knowing that they have any themselves,—encounter the contempt of these peculiar people of God. Detaching religion from morality, they concentrate their whole anxiety on the performance of acts having exclusive reference to God, and an abstinence from others which have no further guilt than that of preoccupying the mind, which is to be left vacant as his temple.

In the highest minds religion has no separate duties of its own, but is the spirit which should impregnate all duty: it changes the direction of no obligation, but gives

intensity to the force of all: it has no rivalry with any pure affection, but befriends and consecrates them all. Under its influence, therefore, life is not essentially changed in character, but simply hopes more, loves more, aspires more. This view alone can save religion from degenerating into morbidness and superstition: but it arranges men too much by the natural groupings of character, and melts away too completely the great eternal classification, to suit the priesthood intrusted with the power of the keys. The Church is committed to a Manichean theory of the phenomena of life, and binds herself to detect in it only the struggle of extreme and absolutely hostile principles. Total spiritual night, and supernatural illumination, divide this scene of things between them; and to give some semblance of probability to this, a badge-morality must be set up, that it may be clear who's who. The notion that they are living in a lost world visibly influences the moral judgments of divines. They are *bound* to find "the world" guilty, and see it under an aspect of indiscriminate condemnation. Hence amusements, occupations, habits, beliefs, are condemned, not for their intrinsic demerits, but simply because they are favourites with a class prejudged as unconverted. What these children of perdition do, the heirs of grace make a point of avoiding; and where the wordly go, the holy stay away; or if they happen to meet in any scene which the former enjoyed, the latter will be found to be groaning in spirit. Contrast and distinction thus become prime essentials with those who fancy themselves secretly marked out from the sinful herd with whom their lot is thrown; and were there no world to inveigh against and shun, one half the rules by which they speak and live would disappear.

This contrast of character between the world and the Church has not always, we confess, been as unreal as it has now become. Usurping a place in Christianity among the theocratic ideas which corrupted the religion almost from the first, it operated largely on history, and tended to realize itself. Under certain conditions, moreover, society

inclines, by natural law, to part into extremes. The ideal of Christian perfection, once given to the mind, could not live in the close presence of a universal corruption of morals, such as spread over the Roman empire in its decline ; and to fly from such a world seemed the sole resource for those who would be faithful to the vows and hopes of their discipleship. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries the whole aspect of Europe supported, by its opposite colouring, the theory of a secular and a spiritual race coexisting on this earth. The face of every country was dotted over with castles as the symbols of the one, and abbeys of the other ; and on the roads, the helm and sword, or the cowl and staff, showed at once the traveller's class. Nor, with all the vices of the monastic system, was the external and assumed distinction entirely deceptive. One difference of character, at all events, never failed : the world was a camp, the abbey a sanctuary ; the one contested at all points by men of war, the other occupied by disciples of the Prince of Peace. But besides this, the state of manners among the nobles and gentry, the cruelties and treachery which marked their feuds, the oppression with which they treated their serfs, the riot and excess which disgraced their dwellings, turned many a province into a plausible likeness to some devil's realm, and rendered it scarce habitable by any but rude and untamed spirits. And so the gentle and devout were driven, by the mere repulsion of such a scene, to take the vows of poverty and celibacy. Through weakness and incapacity also many were forced, by greedy relatives, into the cloister ; and though the retreat often degenerated into a hiding-place of idleness and hypocrisy, yet whatever divine enthusiasm seized anywhere upon the souls of men sought a refuge there ; whatever declension might afterwards creep on, at least the moment of entrance was warm with the fresh fervour of devotion : and *that* was the moment when the eye of spectators, bidding adieu to the young devotee, caught the contrasted glimpse of the world and the Church. Time

after time, the convent door seemed to close behind some soul purely consecrate to Christ. In that age, therefore, there was little to contradict the Church classification: as in heaven, so on earth, were the spheres of character distinct; and to the opposite directions were qualities truly opposite attracted. When all the business and enterprise of life was of a kind that a pious Christian could not touch, it was excusable in him to fly, and, in the absence of all worthy scope for human faculty, make a business of religion.

But what can be more preposterous than to exhibit this type of mind as a model for the emulation of the present age?—as if we had no more natural gymnastics for the character than were furnished in the objectless life of the monk; no temptations, without meeting with devils in a wood; no self-denials, without pricking our waists with sharp chain-belts, or mimicking with piercing hats the crown of thorns! Yet, to reawaken the English admiration for this ascetic discipline, the "Lives of the Saints" are avowedly written; to induce converted bankers to quit Lombard Street for a life of contemplation, to incline cotton-spinners to recite the Psalter every day, and bring Sir Robert Peel down to the house in a hair shirt.

These books are to us in the highest degree melancholy; not the less so for their singular beauty and fascination. Their subtle grace of form and style, their frequent depth and delicacy of expression, are the fair disguise of a fatal unsoundness; their brilliant and romantic colouring is but the sad hectic of the spirit. Their whole aim is to recommend, not *self-devotion* to high ends, but a species of *suicide* for Christ's sake; the quenching of passion, the abrogation of intellect, and the plucking up of the fairest human affections, to be trampled on as weeds. The intensest forces of the soul are to be spent in nothing else than in crushing themselves; and when beauty has made itself hideous, and eloquence learned to stammer, and acuteness blunted its edge against holy contradictions, and creative genius brought itself to do nothing, and he who

might rule an empire sweeps a drain,—then is the sacrifice complete, and the whole nature thus ruined is said to be dedicate to God. As if He were a great devouring abyss of annihilation, demanding to be fed by the everlasting consumption of whatever is lovely and glorious; and stationing men here only to watch every grace and power as it emerged into life, and instantly pitch it back again into death.

In no instance is the extravagance of this doctrine more strikingly presented than in the sketch of St. Bernard, contained in the Life of St. Stephen, Abbot of Citeaux. This poor monastery, the birthplace of the Cistercian order, was distinguished by its severity of discipline. For fourteen years it had existed without drawing to it any new inmates to replace the original fraternity as death thinned their numbers; and already the life of unprofitable pain, and an atmosphere of wood and swamp, had made great havoc with the little band. Amid these discouragements, however, the lonely place was one day startled by the knocking at the gate of thirty men, who applied in a body for admission as novices. This group, composed of men from the noblest houses of Burgundy, was gathered around the person and under the lead of the young and highborn Bernard. The saint's graces of countenance and soul, the sweetness of his eloquence, the quickness of his intellect, are described by the author with the fervour of a manifest sympathy. The enthusiasm of the youth was not content with the sacrifice of himself; but he set himself to drag all his relations with him into the cloister. And he succeeded. Genius, kindled by the consciousness of high resolve, has vast power; and Bernard combined, in utmost perfection, all the qualities before which lower minds, in spite of their rude stubbornness of will, are found to bend and yield; like iron that resists an outer pressure, but grows pliant with inner heat. His burning words and indomitable zeal carried off into monastic captivity his five brothers, who left their old father "to sit alone in his deserted halls with his daughter Humbeline," "a barren trunk, with the choice

boughs lopped off"; besides an uncle and many friends, torn not from estates and possessions merely, but often from their wives, whom Bernard persuaded or terrified into consent and the widowhood of a nunnery. Our biographer does not shrink from the protest which affection and conscience utter against this frightful fanaticism. Whether his replies are satisfactory to faith, we cannot presume to say; but assuredly they are not convincing to reason; indeed, so fine and feminine are they, that they can be called answers only by a species of logical gallantry.

"Now, it may be asked, that Stephen has housed his thirty novices, what has he or anyone else gained by it?—what equivalent is gained for all these ties rudely rent,—for all these bleeding hearts torn asunder, and carrying their wounds unhealed into the cloister? Would not rustics suit Stephen's case well, if he would cultivate a marsh in an old wood, without desolating the hearths of the noblest houses in Burgundy? Human feeling revolts, when high nobles, with their steel helmets, shining hauberks, and painted sercoats, are levelled with the commonest tillers of the soil; and even feelings of pity arise when high-born dames, clad in minever and blazing with jewels, cast all aside for the rough sackcloth and the poor serge of St. Benedict. What shall we say when young mothers quit their husbands and their families, to bury themselves in a cloister? There are here no painted windows and golden candlesticks, with chasubles of white and gold to help out the illusion: feeling and imagination, all are shocked alike, and every faculty of the natural man is jarred at once at the thought. Such words might have been spoken even in Stephen's time; but 'wisdom is justified of her children.' One word suffices to silence all these murmurers; *Ecce homo*,—Behold the man! The wonders of the incarnation are an answer to all cavils. Why, it may as well be asked, did our blessed Lord choose to be a poor man, instead of being clothed in purple and fine linen?—why was His mother a poor virgin?—why was He born in an inn, and laid in a manger?—why did He leave his blessed mother, and almost repulse her, when she would speak to Him?—why was that mother's soul pierced with agony at the sufferings of her divine Son?—why, when one drop of His precious

blood would have healed the whole creation, did He pour it all out for us?—in a word, why, when He might have died (if it be not wrong to say so) what the world calls a glorious death, did He choose out the most shameful, besides heaping to himself every form of insult, and pain of body and soul? He did all this to show us that suffering was now to be the natural state of the new man, just as pleasure is the natural state of the old. Suffering and humiliation are the proper weapons of the Christian, precisely in the same way that independence, unbounded dominion and power, are the instruments of the greatness of the world. No one can see how all this acts to bring about the final triumph of good over evil; it requires faith, but so does the spectacle of our blessed Lord naked on the cross, with St. Mary and St. John weeping on each side. After casting our eyes on the holy rood, does it never occur to us to wonder how it can be possible to be saved in the midst of the endearments of a family and the joys of domestic life? God forbid that any one should deny the possibility!—but does it not at first sight require proof, that heaven can be won by a life spent in this quiet way? Again, let us consider the dreadful nature of sin, even of what are called the least sins, and would not anyone wish to cast in his lot with Stephen, and wash them away by continual penance? Now, if what has been said is not enough to reconcile the reader's mind to their leaving their father in a body, which looks like quitting a positive duty, it should be considered that they believe themselves to be acting under the special direction of God. Miracles were really wrought to beckon them on; at least, they were firmly convinced of the truth of those miracles, which is enough for our purpose; and they would have disobeyed what they considered to be God's guidance, if they had remained in the world. Miracles, indeed, cannot be pleaded to the reversing of commands of the Decalogue; but persons leave their parents for causes which do not involve religion at all, as to follow some profession in a distant quarter of the globe, or to marry; and we may surely excuse St. Bernard and his brothers for conduct which was so amply justified by the event. One word more: every one will allow that he who is continually meditating on heaven and heavenly things, and ever has his conversation in heaven, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, is more perfect than he who is always thinking on worldly affairs. Let no one say

that this perfection is ideal, for it is a mere fact that it has been attained. Stephen and Bernard, and ten thousand other saints, have won this perfection, and it may be it is won now, for the Church verily is not dead, nor have the gates of hell prevailed against her. All cannot attain to such a high state on earth, for it is not the vocation of all. It was, however, plainly God's will, that all Bernard's convertites should be so called, from the fact of their having attained to that state of perfection. They were happy, for to them it was given not to fear those words of our Lord, 'Whosoever loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me'; or again, that saying, spoken to one who asked to go and bury his father, 'Let the dead bury the dead.' Moreover, they knew that blessing, 'Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.' Bernard did receive back both father and sister, for his father died in his arms a monk at Clairvaux, and his sister also in time retired to a cloister. Let any one read St. Bernard's sermons on the Song of Solomon, and he will not doubt that monks have joys of their own, which none but those who have felt them can comprehend." —pp. 113–115.

To unravel the complex web of this dialectic is the less needful, because it is, in its very nature, of that delicate kind that no mind can be held entangled in it, except by spontaneously resting beneath it, pleased with the feel of it on the surface of thought. Besides, who can untwine the windings of a gossamer, thrown with its dewdrops on his reason? It breaks in the attempt; and, to be rid of it, the only way is to wipe it off. As to the argument, however, from the incarnation, which is to be good against all cavils, we would ask,—Is it then true that the Redeemer might have saved the world at much less cost? and was a portion of his suffering absolutely gratuitous?—can his example be quoted in favour of the assumption of pain for its own sake? We had always thought that, "When he was

rich," it was "*for our sakes* that he became poor"; and if *any* of his privations were unrelated to an end, why not *all*?

Again, it is an abuse of all reasonable doctrine of self-denial, to pronounce that "suffering and humiliation" are the *proper weapons* of the Christian, just as independence, dominion, and power. "Suffering and humiliation" are mere negations, productive of nothing, conquering nothing in and by themselves: they do not stand related to the ends of the Christian life as power to the ends of the worldly life; for power achieves its purposes, whatever be the quality of the will that guides it; but suffering achieves nothing, apart from the spirit that bows under it and interprets it: else might a man be saved by a tooth-ache or a bankruptcy. It is easy to see the source whence this exaggeration springs. The genuine moral service laid upon us in this world cannot be accomplished without the endurance of hardship and privation; and he who cannot dispense with his ease and indulgences, and go fasting long months or years without the taste of them, is no faithful vassal of the Divine Power that rules him. There is danger lest he shrink from the post of allotted trial, and the spectacle of privation drive him back from his fidelity. This danger must be provided against by devotedness and resolve: suffering must be so vanquished as to be *no hindrance*, and impose *no limits* to the perseverance of high affections. But a positive help, an efficacious instrument, of noble purposes, it cannot be: for, what moral, what spiritual character, can there be in tortured nerves or a lacerated skin? what sanctity in having the body brought low? does not the spent voluptuary, as well as the fasting saint, accomplish that? Suffering and humiliation are indeed *conditions*, under which a good man must be willing that his moral purposes and vows shall act without abatement or recoil; but in those purposes, with the sustaining help of Heaven, lies his power; there alone is the armoury whence he draws the "weapons" of his conquest. No doubt, the apparition of a sudden difficulty, the

threat of a great peril, nay, even the tension of some terrible anguish, will condense, as it were, the energies of a strong soul, and bring them to a pitch of sublimity impossible to mere volition: but only on this condition, that the suffering be involuntary, starting up as a resistance to be hurled away, not sought as an end to be retained. At once to court and to repel resistance involves a self-neutralizing action of the soul, inconsistent alike with its force and its repose.

It remains to be proved, says our author, with evident inclination to the negative, whether a married man or woman can be saved! Is the doubt serious? What a cheerful prospect must his faith open to him in the future;—not even, —as we had thought,—Abraham and Isaac and Jacob;— but in the absence of family groups, anchorites and cenobites, priests and nuns! It is unfortunate for the celibate successors of St. Peter that *he* was a married man; and curious, that St. Paul, the Apostle of the Protestants, preferred to remain unmarried. Nothing can more clearly prove, than this query about matrimonial salvation, the slavish worship of pain which is taking possession of a large class of ecclesiastics in the present day. Sickened with the prating about happiness and interest among moralists of the last generation, they do not perceive that this wretched idol, like all others, may be worshipped in two ways,—as a god, or as a devil; by adoration, or by deprecation; with the worship of love, or the worship of fear. The ascetic is unconsciously a votary of the very same false deity as the epicurean; only shrinking from him in terror, instead of approaching him with hope; getting into his power through antipathy instead of sympathy; and visiting his approaches with exorcism rather than with prayers. In the eye of truth, however, an idol is neither god nor devil, but just nothing in the world. And so this foolish happiness,—much stroked and much beaten image, carved out of the stock of a wooden philosophy,—is nothing to the essence of human duty at all. Neither positively nor privatively does obligation lie in the

feeling flesh or in the sensitive spirit: the sensibilities can give no sanctities, and take none away: but simply stand by as a neutral presence, that is neither to invite nor to deter. Other scales than any they can give,—scales not of measured intensity but of divine quality,—have authority to determine the ends and provide for the holiness of life.

It is perhaps a very shocking confession, but we shall nevertheless avow our doubt, whether "he who is continually meditating on heaven *is* more perfect than he who is always thinking on worldly affairs." "Continually meditating" on any thing whatsoever we should regard as a state so little perfect, that the question of more or less, according to the object that might engage so mutilated a soul, is without practical value. But as the sustained contemplation of "heavenly things" seems to preclude, while the attention to "worldly things demands," the descent of the will into action, and some wholesome strife for the moral powers, we submit that the last is so far higher than the first. If by "worldly things" we are to think only of objects intrinsically evil, and to suppose the man planning how to cheat his creditors, or wreak his revenge, or pamper his appetites,—the question begs its own answer, and any celestial quietism is better than that. But if the parallel be drawn between a mind floating in spiritual space, and a soul accepting, like a good athlete, the conditions of its battle here, and animating the limbs to work, and the brave heart to throb, under the controlling eye of the great Arbiter, then we say that this last, though he served behind a counter at a retail trade, is a higher graduate in saintship than the most accomplished enthusiast of the cloister. Whatever be the Divine communication with human nature here, it can run through us safely, if at all, only like the electric fluid of the atmosphere above, when we stand in connection with the great earth-currents beneath our feet: and he who would have all and hold all within himself that comes from heaven will find, on his glass stool of insulation, but fruitless shocks or dead paralysis. No man, poising

himself apart, can there set and solve his own problems, —of duty any more than of truth. And with all the rich painting of these "Lives of the Saints," nothing appears to us more deplorable than the image which they give of minds intrinsically great and good, vainly expending their intensest force against the impalpable resistance of their own passions *in vacuo*.

The formidable encroachments made by the Anglican party of late years, and the wide influence exercised by them through the indirect channels of an attractive literature, raise these topics of doctrine, morals, and taste into matters of national, and even political importance. The ecclesiastical phenomena of our time are very anomalous. While the clergy are, beyond comparison, more active and faithful than at any time since the Revolution, this is in great measure owing to an intellectual ferment among them, which places them at a greater distance than before from the sympathy of the nation which they serve. The fresh tide of ideas and sentiments which has rebaptized them with earnestness, and delivered them from routine, has poured in upon them from the Universities. It is of academic source, and of academic character. It is the accumulation of thought and theory, the product of books; the result even of a vast and deliberate design, conceived and partly realized by one commanding and systematizing intellect. Of that deep and vivifying mind the change in the clergy is, in great measure, but the propagated influence. Meanwhile, during this reanimation of the Church on the collegiate side, the tide of life without has run in the opposite direction; and the very feeling prevalent, that Oxford has been the scene of a sort of Popish plot for plunging England back into Romanism, and, by a species of logical black art, spiriting away across the German Ocean the Reformation and all its works, has broken down popular faith in the simplicity and veracity of the clergy, and shaken the whole fabric. The new doctrines are hated; and the old ones,—as would appear from the eagerness to be rid of

them,—were not satisfactory to the divines themselves. The people who believe on authority are pulled two ways; those who believe on conviction are pulled neither; and thus, while the momentum of an inert perseverance is lost, the *vis viva* of a new impulse is not gained. There is something, moreover, exceedingly offensive in the grand and sacerdotal style with which the new ritual pretensions are put forth by men who have only recently discovered them; and among the names most prominent in their assertion, there is one at least whose appearance in such a connection does more to discredit the whole movement than shoals of tracts and *Catenæ Patrum* to advance it. In the *Times* of March 28th appear certain resolutions having reference to the Gorham decision: they declare, among other alarming results of Mr. Gorham's interpretation, that the Evangelical "portion of the Church," by participation in "such conscious, wilful, and deliberate act, become formally separated from the Catholic body, and can no longer assure to its members the grace of the sacraments and the remission of sins." Among the subscribers to this denunciation against the Evangelical party are two sons of William Wilberforce! Everybody asks, Were not these gentlemen brought up at Clapham?—were they not baptized themselves by a vital clergyman, and catechized by a Cambridge saint?—was not Charles Simeon the trusted friend at the paternal house?—were they not, moreover, trained in a peculiar horror of wax candles and holy water, as in all the other essentials of decided piety? When did they discover the good father's "formal separation from the Catholic body," and his uncertain provision for the remission of their sins? And this is the school which, when it would keep stagnant the young thought of a new generation, preaches up "the inherent sanctity of *hereditary* religion"! Conscience no doubt is imperative, and superior to all weaknesses; but conscience bears, without forfeiture of authority, some little mingling of human affection; and few would have condemned a preference, in the present instance, for the silent modesty

of filial reverence over the forward pomp of sacerdotal denunciation.

Be this as it may, the hierarchical style is looked on with suspicion in England, especially when it is an upstart affair, new to the ears of men fifty years old. It is ranked with the rhodomontade of a Mexican dictator, or the bombast of a Haytian emperor. The chief effect of the dissensions which have produced it is to startle quiet people into a discovery of what the Church theology really is; to convince them in what latitude of thought she lies; and show them that, while they have been drifting down the living current of centuries, she strives to hold to her moorings in the past, and denies that she even drags her anchor in the least. The old doctrines being undisguisedly reproduced, people exclaim, "This is not what we believe, and we do not choose to be bound by it. It may be all right after the fashion of the old doctors; but somehow it does not ring like the Sermon on the Mount, and does not seem to fit with men that ride on railroads, read newspapers, and sail round the globe." The complaint, though felt rather than uttered, or uttered by those who cannot explain and justify it, is perfectly well founded. It is *impossible* for the layman of the nineteenth century to think after the manner of the fourth, or even of the sixteenth, and he must insist, sooner or later, on carrying the clergy with him. They, living more among books, may find it easier to sustain a stationary mood of mind; but they, too, must secretly feel a change, the open recognition of which would be an infinite relief to their sincerity. The affectation of immobility incurs in this world the penalty of destruction. Catholic theories can no more arrest the course of change, than the doctrines of a universal atmosphere can stop the wind. It may be very true that the Church is built upon a rock; but the rock is rooted in the earth, and stands above the sea, and with the mountains and the floods must roll on through the great seasons of Providence.

A glance backward into the past will show that the aliena-

tion of the national intelligence and piety from the Church system is not wonderful, or to be simply bewailed as a sign of degeneracy. That system, if we assume the Anglican point of view, was made up before the end of the fourth century; and if we take the Evangelical, early in the sixteenth. No change has found admission since. Let any one cast his eye, however superficially, over the course of knowledge and the history of civilization during the last three centuries, and say whether the image men formed to themselves of the constitution of this universe, at the commencement of this time, could possibly remain equally credible at the end. It is vain to say that a revelation abides steadfast amid change: the dogmatic system of the Church is not a revelation, but a human elaboration of the contents, materials, and even accretions of revelation; and its soundness and durability as a structure depend, not simply on the substance of the living rock within it, but not less on the selection, the combination, the proportion of parts; for all which the architectonic intellect of man is alone responsible. No less vain is it to plead that the creeds have reference only to moral and religious truth, which lies above the reach, or at least beyond the range, of the inductive sciences and practical arts, and so shines with constancy through all their shifting light and shade. The allegation is not tenable in fact. The Articles of the Church abound with metaphysical propositions, with historical judgments, with verdicts of literary criticism which have no claim whatsoever to a moral or religious character. This is not, in our opinion, to be charged as a fault against those who framed the code of belief,—unless on the ground of an excess in definition: it is impossible for faith to remain purely subjective: it looks within and without, and from its eager eye darts an interpreting glance on all things: it has the attribute which Plato assigns to philosophy,—that it is *συνοπτικός*; and as it is ever in part a heritage, in part a correction, of the past, its position in relation to antecedent thought must needs be laid down. We do not,

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therefore, agree with those who complain of religion for meddling at all with physical and metaphysical questions, and mixing itself up with human history as well as divine. Minds at once inquisitive and devout cannot rest without a certain philosophy of faith, in which all that comes before their thought finds a place in harmony with their perception of a divine order. We will not even raise the question whether, in the age of the Reformation, the propositions expressive of such a theory might properly be erected into authoritative conditions of Christian fellowship. But in defending the right of theology to go out from its own centre, and clear itself all round by objective definitions, we forego the plea which was to excuse it from all change, and can no longer say that, being wholly ethical and spiritual, it is free from admixture with the mutable and mortal. Its liberty to *visit* the entire realm of knowledge is not to be converted into a hostile occupancy: the guest must not settle as the usurper, nor the seer's rod be turned into the iron sceptre. The essence of the religion of Christendom is eternal; but the dogmatic scheme constructed by applying it forward and backward in time from the last hour of chaos to the day of doom, and along all radii in space from "the spirits in prison" to the seventh heaven, must take the risks of human theory, and be open to the enlargements of human experience.

Now, consider only the picture of the physical universe familiar to the mind of the sixteenth century at its commencement, and trace the inevitable effect of our altered distribution of natural bodies in space. The Ptolemaic system,—not refuted till 1543, and not renounced even by the learned for half a century more,—had universal possession of the European imagination at the time when Luther preached. All men judged of the relations of earth and sky by the same immediate impressions of unaided sense which dictated the first chapter of Genesis. Under these conditions, not only was the Mosaic cosmogony accepted as a matter of course, but little difficulty

was felt in conforming to even the narrow Hebrew conception of the actual system of the world,—a subterranean Hades, stored with incarcerated spirits, and a heaven rising in successive tiers for the reception of souls in light, and the personal abode of Christ and God; a place pictured rather as an Oriental edifice than as an astronomical creation. Those caverns under the earth, and those halls above, supplied a local hell and heaven, which rendered easy all the dogmatic imagery respecting the ascent and descent of beings from province to province of this realm. And, while the earth maintained its station in the midst, no misgiving was encountered in representing the spectacle of the Advent and Incarnation as a central object of attention to the universe, and the Redemption as a fact not in the interests of one world, but in the history of all. But by the telescope and the calculus these conceptions are set afloat and scattered through infinite space, with no structural picture to give them coherence and support their relations.

From the architecture, turn to the chronology of nature. In the sixteenth century, no facts were known demanding more than some five or six thousand years for the past duration of the globe; nor was there any inducement to assign to different dates the origin of man and of his abode, or of this planet and the heavenly bodies. Hence, not only was there no hypothesis of development to embarrass by its rivalry the literal theory of creation, but no scruple was present to hinder the compression of the whole birth of things into six days. Thus the Sabbath rested undisturbed on its primitive foundation. That the Creative Power, having framed all else, should culminate in man, was no hard conception to those who deemed this earth the metropolis of the universe. Through the researches of geologists, this whole system of conceptions has become untenable. The process of creation has escaped all limits of chronology; and burst into infinitude of time, as well as space; and no Sedgwick or Buckland

of the Church can henceforth read, without rationalizing interpretation, the passage of the Decalogue inscribed above every altar:—"For *in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day;* wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day and hallowed it."

During the last three centuries, the knowledge of the earth's surface, and of the tribes that people it, has been vastly extended. The natural history of man, deriving light from new sources, and especially from the contrasts and affinities of different languages, has become the object of a distinct science. We shall not be accused of over-statement if we affirm, as the result of this change, that the question as to the unity of human species, their descent from a single pair, is a perfectly open one. Notwithstanding the decision of the late Dr. Prichard, the weight of opinion is probably in favour of the distribution of mankind into several races, originally distinct. The topic, at all events, is not prohibited even by the "Index Expurgatorius" of conventional theology, and was freely discussed between Arnold and Whately in their correspondence. Any influence which should discourage such inquiries would be inimical to all the higher interests of society; and any intellectual clergyman would treat with just scorn the impertinent bigot who should accuse him of heresy for maintaining that a Papuan savage was of a different stock from the Caucasians. Yet is the bigot so entirely illogical? Is not the Church the commissioned medium of salvation? is not salvation conditional on regeneration? is not regeneration the reversal and obliteration of birth-sin? is not birth-sin an affair of lineage, transmitted from the corruption of Adam's nature? and was not that corruption the penalty of the fall? If, therefore, we are not all the children of one stock, either there must have been many Edens, and Satan must have offered a plurality of apples to numerous Eves, black, red, and white; or else the curse, and with it the counteracting redemption, must be valid for

only one tribe. In both cases, the dogmatic scheme of the Church suffers from manifest embarrassment: in the first, from an incredible hypothesis, too absurd to name except for argument's sake; in the second, from a vast system of missionary effort, no less than of speculative belief, resting entirely on the universality of certain propositions respecting the lost condition of man through hereditary contamination. The Reformers would have staked their entire religion, without hesitation, on the assertion that all men are sons of Adam. Does any instructed man, in the present day, feel that on such a basis Christianity may fitly rest?

Examples might be multiplied without end. Dr. Buckland can tell us whether any change of opinion has taken place respecting the Noachic deluge; whether it was *always* thought a thing indifferent to Church theology to defend the doctrine of a universal flood, or to give it up; or whether any advocate was ever found so indiscreet as to work up an eager mass of evidence and hypothesis on this point, impressed more with the exultation of the triumphant divine than with the calmness of the inquiring philosopher.* And Bishop Thirlwall could pronounce whether the light thrown by comparative philology on the affinities of languages and the filiations of mankind affects at all the quiet credence with which, a century ago, the "Inspired Narrative" of the confusion of tongues was read by the learned, no less than the unlearned; and whether, in general, the modern admission of a mythical element in the records of ancient nations can easily be repelled from the Hebrew literature, so as to place its monuments in the exceptional position of having *no* ante-historical period. These particular features in primeval history have, it is

* See Buckland's "*Reliquiæ Diluvianæ;* Observations on the Organic Remains contained in Caves, Fissures, and Diluvial Gravel and other Geological Phenomena, *attesting the Action of a Universal Deluge.*" 1823. Compare Buckland's Bridgewater Treatise, Vol. I. p. 94, note, where this "attestation" is withdrawn.

true, no *immediate* reference to the dogmatic system of the Church, but they belong to the same record that supplies the whole scheme with its theological data; and it is impossible to throw open to discussion the questions they involve, yet retain the adjacent topics under the key of ecclesiastical authority.

Again, let it be considered what a revolution has taken place in human physiology and psychology, bringing under the dominion of ascertained law a host of phenomena, once familiarly referred to preternatural agency. The mere removal of demonology from modern belief has introduced a wholly new condition of the human imagination, and alienated it from many conceptions formerly esteemed inseparable from orthodox faith. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the sphere yet open for Satanic interposition in the affairs of the world was not small, precarious, invisible,—the mere secret suggestion of a wicked thought, which after all might as well be indigenous as foreign,—but various, and palpable; recognized not in creeds only, but in medicine and law; and furnishing formulas of expression to the learned, and a thousand usages to the people of every class. Lord Bacon was not above the belief in "possession." Sir Thomas Browne regarded the denial of witchcraft in the light of downright atheism, inasmuch as the same authority which reveals the dispensations of God and his goodness declares no less clearly the agency of the false one and the delusions of sorcery. Witches were disposed of by a process of trial more indicative of a susceptible faith than of a very sensitive justice: they were put into a pair of scales, with the parish Bible for a counterpoise, and their guilt or innocence decided by weight. The more formal and deliberate procedure of the regular courts affords, however, still stronger proof of the tenacity with which this belief was interwoven with the religious faith of cultivated men; and the fact that two widows were hanged for witchcraft in 1665, under the sentence of Sir Matthew Hale, may help us to realize the

entire change which has befallen the climate of modern thought.

Yet no one, we think, can look with the mere *lumen siccum* of a logical understanding at the arguments by which the supporters of the doctrine of possession defended their position, without confessing that, on the Church principle of using all canonical Scriptures, not merely "for example of life and instruction of manners," but as an "authority" "to establish any doctrine," their ground is unassailable.* "Let a man," says Coleridge, "be once fully persuaded that there is no difference between the two positions, 'The Bible contains the religion

* We subjoin the account of the trial of the two poor creatures referred to; taking it from S. T. Coleridge's "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit," p. 45.

"Rose Cullender and Amy Duny, widows, of Lowestoff, Suffolk, were tried for witchcraft, on the 10th March, 1665, at Bury St. Edmund's. Sir M. Hale told the jury, 'that he would not repeat the evidence unto them, lest by so doing he should wrong the evidence on the one side or the other. Only this acquainted them, that they had two things to inquire after: first, whether or no these children were bewitched; secondly, whether the prisoners at the bar were guilty of it.

"'*That there were such creatures as witches, he made no doubt at all. For, first, the Scriptures had affirmed so much. Secondly, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons, which is an argument of their confidence in such a crime.* And such hath been the judgment of this kingdom, as appears by that Act of Parliament which hath provided punishments proportionable to the quality of the offence. And desired them strictly to observe their evidence; and desired the great God of heaven to direct their hearts in the weighty thing they had in hand. For to condemn the innocent, and to let the guilty go free, were both an abomination to the Lord.' They were found guilty on thirteen indictments. The bewitched got well of all their pains the moment after the conviction; only Susan Chandler felt a pain like pricking of pins in her stomach. The judge and all the court felt fully satisfied with the verdict, and thereupon gave judgment against the witches, that they should be hanged. They were much urged to confess, but would not. They were executed on Monday, 17th March following, but they confessed nothing."—State Trials, VI. p. 700.

revealed by God,' and 'Whatever is contained in the Bible is religion, and was revealed by God'; and that whatever can be said of the Bible, collectively taken, may and must be said of each and every sentence of the Bible, taken for and by itself,—and I no longer wonder at these paradoxes. I only object to the inconsistency of those who profess the same belief, and yet affect to look down with a contemptuous, or compassionate smile on John Wesley for rejecting the Copernican system as imcompatible therewith; or who exclaim, 'Wonderful!' when they hear that Sir Matthew Hale sent a crazy old woman to the gallows in honour of the Witch of Endor. In the latter instance it might, I admit, have been an erroneous (though even at this day the all but universally received) interpretation of the word which we have rendered by *witch*;—but I challenge these divines and their adherents to establish the compatibility of a belief in the modern astronomy and natural philosophy with their and Wesley's doctrine respecting the inspired Scriptures, without reducing the doctrine itself to a plaything of wax, or rather to a half-inflated bladder, which, when the contents are rarefied in the heat of rhetorical generalities, swells out round, and without a crease or wrinkle; but bring it into the cool temperature of particulars, and you may press, and as it were except, what part you like—so it be but one part at a time—between your thumb and finger."

The state of belief, in relation to demoniacal possession, at the commencement of the seventeenth century, is evidenced, not merely by casual and private examples, but by the public statutes of the Church of England. In the seventy-second Ecclesiastical Canon, the *practice of exorcism by the clergy* is placed under regulation: it is classed with other offices of the ministry,—such as the keeping of fasts and holding meetings for sermons, and is submitted to the same restraints; that is, the license and direction of the bishop of the diocese must be first obtained and had under his hand and seal, ere a clergyman is to attempt, under

pretence of possession or obsession, by fasting and prayer, to cast out any devil or devils. We would recommend to the Bishop of Exeter the revival of this neglected episcopal prerogative: this reserved right of expelling or retaining devils is no small part of the power to open and shut. Why let it lie idle? If exorcism is not a sacrament, it bears comparison with one: it casts out Satan, while baptism casts out his works. Is it not a part of the Apostolic commission,—"Cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give"? Why take up the transmitted authority by halves,—an authority given in the Gospels and reaffirmed by the Canons? Did not the same voice which commanded the twelve to baptize command them to exorcize? The operation of both offices is preternatural alike: and as even false prophets and apostles could cast out demons, there is no pretence for saying that the function is beyond the reach of Christ's true representatives on earth. Where, we ask, can this parallelism be broken? And if the progress of knowledge has put every sane man, though an ecclesiastic, out of condition for speaking of exorcism with a grave face, and forced every critic, however orthodox, to explain away, as best he can, the favourite evidence, with the first three Evangelists, of their Lord's Messiahship, viz., the instinctive recognition of Him by the devils who met his eye or heard his name,—is it to be expected that kindred conceptions, lying within the same scheme, should be as welcome to the minds of men as they were three centuries ago?

These changes in the whole intellectual atmosphere of the age are patent to all the world. They affect the general body of the educated laity, so as to place them in the most painful or the most dangerous of all positions,—a position *above* the faith which they profess. Such men have to make excuses for that which should penetrate and rule their nature; and to patronize where they should adore. The somewhat narrow, though scholarly, education of the clergy may often screen them from the full effect of this popular light of the time. But then, on the other hand,

the great advance made during the last half-century in the theological sciences is known, for the most part, to them alone; and if this has not largely modified their whole conception of the Christian faith, and made them conscious of many a doubt within their system, and a whole world of thought beyond it, the effect has been very different from that which the devoutest and most sober minds have experienced in every other Protestant country. The light which has been thrown on the origin and structure of the earliest Christian records,—on the presence within them of purely local and human elements,—on the several streams of Jewish, Oriental, and Platonic influence, which blended with divine constituents to form the creeds of Christendom,—has rendered necessary a freer and larger method for disengaging the permanent from the transitory in the Church than was possible to the criticism of the sixteenth century. To those who study in earnest for holy orders, this is no secret. And so keenly do they feel the discrepancy between what they must promise to teach and what they apprehend to be true, that the number is yearly increasing of candidates who are repelled from the Church by the conditions of ordination. These cases are smothered and kept secret, as far as possible; but to many it is well known that they comprise a large proportion of the finest genius and devoutest conscience that might of late years have been gained to the service of the altar. One after another have such men been brought, in the deep mood of holy faith and discipleship, to the very threshold of the Church; but when the moment of entrance came, the low and narrow portal would not let the high thought and the great heart pass. Minds of puny stature, or of a thin subtlety, or of compressible scrupulosity, slip through; while natures at once of massive reality and of divine proportions are excluded: the priest glides in; but the prophet stands without. Who can wonder at the spreading impression, that statesmen and high ecclesiastics fear and hate to see the consecration of earnest genius to

religion? that they *wish* the Church to be a refuge for mediocrity? and that, so long as sagacious dulness or pliant laxity shall find no hindrance, they are content to let the Christianity of England lie far behind the average intelligence of her people, and sink into an object of unbelief to the learned, contempt to the intellectual, and shame and sorrow to the devout? If they think by such means to clear away all troublesome spirits, and maintain a dignified, but unproductive repose, even this unworthy policy experience will convict of mistake. There are other dangers to her establishment, and to the State with which it is connected, greater than can arise from eminent and powerful personal qualities in its ministers. The erratic energies of original minds are, no doubt, difficult to adjust with the drowsy persistency of an aristocratic Church; and that Beresfords and Blomfields are not anxious for the companionship of young seers, with fresh eye, and brotherhoods under vows of piety and of poverty, is far from strange. The decent and tasteful formalism which with inoffensive elocution drops the heavenly word upon the earth-cold pavement of a cathedral; which thinks infinite questions honoured with the vehicle of gentlemanly breath; which is content if burning truths but melt a little way into the icy heart of fashion ere they become extinct,—is preferred, on very intelligible grounds, to a deeper and more insatiable fervour. Yet even to the temporal peace of a Church there is a peril more alarming than would be the genius of Pascal, the visions of Bunyan, and the enthusiasm of Wesley. When men, who begin life with the passions of the hustings, end it with the professions of the saint; when the pamphleteers of a faction become successors of the Apostles and vicars of Christ; when the perturbations of personal temper appear beneath the holy and oily surface of episcopal address, and, under plea of zeal for souls, the mitred party-leader finds his occupation once again,—the repose of the Church is not less broken than if a Baxter had been pronounced orthodox, or when a

Whitefield had carried off his converted colliers to the conventicle. The higher order of minds may demand too much freedom, but the lower do not always prove conveniently pliant. If they secure you against the chances of a grand faith, they do not save you from the danger of a mean superstition; and the aggressive fervour of the one may need less vigilance than the proud obstinacy of the other.

Religious enthusiasm is the outburst of an individual's mind, and, radiating from his spirit, passes beyond this living centre in fainter waves away. A sacerdotal superstition, on the other hand, is the fixed passion of a class which remains permanent, and whose collective spirit can but slowly change. From the very nature of the case, it exists under conditions inaccessible to reason. It relies for support on the class of feelings which have subjugated men to thaumaturgic imposture; and it so blends the interested pride with possibly the disinterested faith of the priesthood, as to produce a certain amphibious passion between hypocrisy and conviction, found peculiarly in the decline of religions. That passion is, perhaps, of all human influences the most difficult for the State to encounter. It is neither temporal nor spiritual: it has neither the prudence of reason, nor the generosity of faith: it is closed alike to persuasion and to affection: it lives neither on the land nor in the stream; but evades you in the slime, where the produce of the secular earth grows rank, and the waters of a pure enthusiasm lie stagnant. This monster passion is growing huge in England just now;—"Behemoth, in the covert of the reed and of the fens, that trusteth he can draw up Jordan into his mouth": but "from the mountains shall new rivers come down," and, "like a lion by the swelling of Jordan," he will be borne away.

What, then, is the duty of the State towards the Church in a crisis like the present?—to represent, by a more intelligible demeanour than ever before, the alienated

affections of the country; and, in relation to dogmatic conditions of fellowship, to take a course directly opposite to the tendency of the agitating ecclesiastics. The sacerdotal party are struggling for a narrowed creed; the Judicial Committee have wisely vindicated the principle of latitude. The Anglicans contend for dogmatic unity; let the State boldly demand provision for variety. The government is trustee in this matter, not only for a Church already marked internally by wide diversities, but for a nation of which nearly one half has, at different periods, been injuriously driven from her pale. The civil disabilities of these excluded classes having been removed, their ecclesiastical excommunication cannot safely remain neglected in any future legislation for the Church; and so far from any contraction of the terms of communion being for an instant entertained, a gradual enlargement of them ought to be steadily enforced by the government. Were all harmonious and healthful within the pale, there might be some fair excuse for leaving in quiet action what answered at least the wants of a definite majority in the country; but it is notorious that if to-morrow all the sects of the nation were thrust into the Church, its disunion and diversities of creed would be no greater than at present; and its only decent plea against comprehension is entirely forfeited. Besides, a state cannot lend itself as a party to theological disputes, but is bound to estimate the Church purely by its moral efficiency,—its competency to express and sustain the highest life of the people, to hold and train their affections, and to educate them according to their consciences, in their obligations as citizens of this world and children of God.

If there be in a country an organized community of Christians, enjoying the confidence and sympathy of the nation at large, and able, by appeal to reverential feeling, to secure those moralities of the social state which law can defend only by coercion, we know of no valid theoretical objection against the endowment of such a body by the

legislature; and if its members choose to include within their aim other ends, foreign to the purposes of government,—such as the removal of mystic stains by mystic rites,—let them be free to do so, *provided no damage is thus done to the prior state requisites.* But this proviso must be stringently enforced; and if the supplementary ends are of a nature to prejudice the primary; if they comprise dogmas and ceremonies by which the range of social agency is restricted and its integrity lowered; above all, if they so withdraw the mind of the clergyman from the rational and moral interests of society as to convert him into an obstacle in the way of national education and culture, except on the exclusive terms of his professional speciality,—then the alliance is justly forfeited, and the State, failing to gain the stipulated benefits, reclaims of right the vested endowment. Can any candid observer affirm that the Established Church fairly performs the national function intrusted to her? Is she not at this moment spending all her zeal on disputes which, but for their possible results, the nation regards with contemptuous indifference? Have her teachings been such, her methods of operation such, as to retain in her faith and power the great working class of this country? She complains perhaps of the copresence of rival sects, that break and paralyze her energies. But did she not herself disown them and drive them out? and have they not had, in her coldness or narrowness, such sufficient cause to quit her communion, that their founders are, for the most part, remembered with a just reverence, accounted as the worthies of our history, and acknowledged to have done a good work? To what, so much as to the incompetency and mismanagement of the Church, are we to ascribe the state of things so forcibly described by Mr. Thom, in the following page?

"The Christian Church has instruments enough, and self-sacrifice enough, to parcel the world among her ministers, to

break up the close layers of its masses so that, instead of only like consorting with like, and ignorance and vice pressed together, lying in thick strata on one another, human beings, instead of dense, impermeable clusters, should stand forth, individual and distinct, so that air and light could circulate around them, and not one soul be left without living contact, through a brother's touch, with the sympathies of earth and the supports of heaven. But the Christian Church cannot do this as it now exists. With its conflicting creeds, and rival interests, and deadly jealousies, it cannot unite its devoted servants, and send them forth in one spirit to divide the toil between them. If we were all of one heart, believing that holy affections are the only powers that can enlighten and regenerate fallen men, there might not be a spot in all this land in which even an individual could be found without the light and love of a brother's spirit bent full upon him. And why is not this the case now? Because, in consequence of our divisions about doctrines, *Christianity cannot be locally applied.* In that fact lies mainly the explanation of the spiritual condition and destitution of the people. A parochial administration of Christianity, a beautiful and competent idea, is now an impossibility. A catholic religion requires a catholic church; but we have only *Roman* catholic churches, and Church of England churches, and Calvinistic churches, and other reciprocally repelling and antagonistic churches. If Christianity was one power, and could use the world's wisdom of the division of labour, it could assign to each manageable district its own responsible agency, sufficient to flood it with light. But this cannot be where you will hardly find two neighbouring houses in which the same theory of salvation is accepted. And so our Christian churches gather their isolated worshippers from all quarters; and in our large towns, at least, no man has an allotted field, and no church and no person is charged with the spiritual condition of any spot. And thus our churches sit apart, exerting some attraction over scattered individuals of like affinities among the dispersed multitudes, but with no power of thoroughly occupying the Field of the World, each cultivating its own corner of the vineyard. And as with that village of Samaria which would not receive our Lord because his face was as though he was going to Jerusalem, there are places in Christian lands where

disciples, earnest and beloved as James and John, would not be received ; and, probably, like James and John, might know so little what spirit they are of, as to be ready to call down fire from heaven in their Master's name. These are the consequences of established creeds and churches,—and this the price we pay for a Religion of Doctrines, instead of a religion that looks only to the spirit and the life ; for a religion of saving orthodoxies, instead of a religion of all-purifying love. The prophecy remains to be fulfilled, and Christianity cannot occupy the world as the waters cover the deep, because Theology forbids the union and the distribution of its powers. We have left to Sin and Satan the advantage of the principle, Divide and Conquer."—*Religion, the Church, and the People*, p. 20.

The Church of England has enjoyed rare opportunities. It wants nothing that history can give to render it respectable. It lost little of the external dignity of the elder system when it opened a way for some infusion of energy from the Reformation. Its hierarchy ascends by the same gradations, and retains the same titles, as the parent body : its creeds are translations of ancient forms : its liturgy is a provincial idiom of the language of the universal Church. The Anglicans are right in maintaining that it was not of Protestant origin, but rather a national graft detached from the stem of so many centuries ; that it did not rudely tear away, but simply trained around the local structure, the sacred ivy of antiquity. Yet it was not left without the purifying influence of a day of persecution, as well as the prolonged contact of more earnest and spiritual reformers, who sometimes introduced within the pale the self-denying virtues and rude fervour that are the secret of popular power. The honourable duty was devolved upon it, by the folly of a king, of being the advocate of liberty, and the representative of injured conscience. It has had the almost uninterrupted and exclusive command of all the resources and all the distinctions of the ancient universities, and has enriched English literature with some of its most cherished names. If ever a Church has had a

chance of collecting into the focus of its action the most various and even opposite influences that can sway the human mind, it is the Church of England. Yet, at last, the day is coming when the account will be asked of these opportunities. The churches of our forefathers will not be permanently left to the sort of teachers who are now wearying the world with their puerilities, and shocking it with their intolerance; nor the ecclesiastical estates of the nation abandoned to the guardianship which has been so shamefully abused. To the large and humiliating subject of the Church temporalities, we have abstained from adverting. Convinced as we are, that what alone the Church cares to teach has ceased to be the real religion of this nation, we have not thought it worth while to enter into the abuses of secular administration. The exposure of the Ecclesiastical Commission is fresh in every one's recollection. And in Mr. Beeston's sensible pamphlet will be found a series of facts as to the management of episcopal and chapter lands, which we should think it impossible to parallel in the history of private rapacity and corporate dishonesty.

"Raro antecedentem scelestum
Deseruit pede Pœna claudo."

No one who reads the statements to which we refer can believe that the reckoning will be long delayed; and among the chances of the near future, we esteem it not the least, that an irresistible force of opinion will support in substance the prayer of a Memorial to the Queen, which appeared in this "Review" two years ago,—for FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.*

"Admittance to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, and the liberty of worshipping and expounding the Scriptures in the churches of our ancestors, are now made to depend upon subscription to certain articles of

* See the No. for July, 1848, p. 497.

faith known as the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

"This test, when first established, was a departure from the principle of the Protestant Reformation, founded upon the right of private judgment, without which there can be no progress in religious truth; and it led to those lamentable schisms which have since divided English Protestants into Churchmen and Dissenters of various denominations, who would otherwise have remained a united religious community. These schisms are now widely extending, from the differences which have lately sprung up within the Church itself upon the meaning of the Thirty-nine Articles; and we call upon your Majesty, by removing this cause of sectarian distinctions, as a middle wall of partition unknown to Christianity, and by promoting the application of the divine precepts of universal charity, to restore among your Majesty's subjects the 'unity of the spirit in the bonds of peace.'

"We ask *for the repeal of the Act of Uniformity* (14 Car. II. c. 4); *the abolition of all subscription tests for admission to universities, the houses of Parliament, or for holy orders; and that in the case of all churches built, endowed, or supported with public money, the people, by their local representatives, or in their religious congregations, shall have a voice in the appointment of their own religious teachers.*"

III.

THE BATTLE OF THE CHURCHES.*

In 1822, a French philosopher discovered the grand law of human progression, revealed it to applauding Paris, brought the history of all civilized nations to pronounce it infallible, and computed from it the future course of European society. The mind of man, we are assured by Auguste Comte, passes by invariable necessity through three stages of development;—the state of religion, or fiction; of metaphysics, or abstract thought; of science, or positive knowledge.† No change in this order, no return upon its steps, is possible; the shadow cannot retreat upon the dial, or the man return to the stature of the child. Every one

* 1. "Lectures on Certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in submitting to the Catholic Church." By John Henry Newman, Priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Second Edition. London. 1850.

2. "The British Churches in Relation to the British People." By Edward Miall. London. 1849.

3. "Gilbert's Pamphlets, including the Pope's Brief; Cardinal Wiseman's Pastoral; Lord John Russell's Letter, &c."

4. "The Bishop of London's Charge, delivered in St. Paul's, Saturday, Nov. 2nd, 1850."

5. "The Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster and the New Hierarchy." By George Bowyer, Esq., D.C.L. London. 1850.

6. "Cardinal Wiseman's Appeal to the Reason and Good Feeling of the British People. Nov. 19, 1850."

7. "Lord Beaumont's Letter to the Earl of Zetland. *Times*, Nov. 26, 1850.—*Westminster Review*, 1851.

† Cours de Philosophie Positive. 1ere Leçon, p. 3, et seqq. 51e Leçon, p. 653, et seqq.

who is not behind the age will tell you, that he has outlived the theology of his infancy and the philosophy of his youth, to settle down on a physical belief in the ripeness of his powers. And so, too, the world, passing from myth to metaphysics, and from metaphysics to induction, begins with the Bible and ends with the "Cours de Philosophie Positive." To the schools of the prophets succeeds "L'Ecole Polytechnique"; and our intellect, having surmounted the meridians of God and the Soul, culminates in the apprehension of material nature. Henceforth the problems so intensely attractive to speculation, and so variously answered by faith, retire from the field of thought. They have an interest, as in some sense the autobiography of an adolescent world: but they are never to return in living action upon the earth.

In 1850, the most practical nation of Europe,—the nation in which the high-priest of inductive science was Chancellor nearly two centuries and a half ago,—where the law of gravitation, and the theory of the tides, and the aberration of light, were demonstrated, the circulation of the blood discovered, the steam-engine invented, the first railroad made,—the nation of factories and ships,—with instinct against all hypotheses, and impatience for every subtlety,—signs requisitions about the grace of baptism, holds county meetings on the doctrine of Apostolicity, demands leading articles on the remission of sins, and listens in crowded town-halls to the canon law and the Tridentine decrees. M. Comte's law stands aghast. Since the memorable date of his discovery, the world must have been altered: he found it in its last stage; it is now in its first: it had then for some ages emerged from the last trail of theology; it has now plunged again into the very nucleus of that nebulous light. The vaticinations of philosophy on human affairs are seldom more fortunate than studies in the Apocalypse; the pomp of discovery becomes ludicrous in the completeness of the frustration. In the present instance, this can be no just matter of

surprise or regret; it was a bold, and by no means a cheerful presumption, that mankind could never again feel an interest in those awful topics which have so long and deeply engaged their curiosity and affections. Were the prospect ever so inviting of such an advance into the maturity of reason, a shade of melancholy wonder would fall back on the long infancy of the race. We would not willingly, for the most brilliant promise of the future, be made utterly ashamed of the past. But if, as Comte's law would persuade us, the whole career of religion on the earth is but the action of a nursery drama; if, until it is played out, the real business of this world cannot begin; if the energies displayed in it pursue illusions, and are barren as the tossing of the arms in dreams,—with what sad eye must we look on the greater part of human history!-the faith, which is the first cement of nations and source of law, is but the trick of nature's police for cheating them into order. The poetry which issues from mythology and leads to history, springs from a root that bears no truth. The greatest revolutions the world has ever seen have broken forth from Jerusalem, from Mecca, from Wittenberg, to sweep over the earth without a meaning, and pass away. The old Hebrew race survives, testifying to nothing, but perfectly fulfilling its destiny by selling quills and buying old clothes. The Church of Rome, of all institutions the most august and durable, which crosses the chasm between ancient and modern times, and the ocean between the New and Old World; which has cost mankind more thought and treasure, and given them a more wonderful guidance, than any earlier or later agency,—has been but an empty presence, the richest pageant in the carnival of folly. All the thought and genius spent on questions of faith, and inspired by the sentiments of devotion, have been wasted and misapplied: they come down to us, not for our help, but for our warning; and if we admire them, we catch no high contagion of wisdom. In short, if all the divinity, all the speculative philosophy, all the poetry and records of

religion, are to be banished to the juvenile library of the world, what literature remains to be the heritage of its maturity? A theory which treats the "theological condition" of the human mind as one which is to be outgrown, exhibits history in the dreariest light, as a confused waste of unproductive activity and misguided faculty. We know of nothing to countenance such a contemptuous interpretation of the historical development of mankind; or to encourage the belief that the passions, which direct themselves on supernatural objects, have spent their force. Their partial and local decadence, a phenomenon invariably marking, not the advance, but the decline of national life, has hitherto been succeeded by some wider renewal of their power. They have shown themselves capable of coexisting with the greatest vigour of intellect, the highest style of character, and the most various capacity for thought or for affairs. If we are amazed at the absurdities to which they sometimes commit themselves, we find a parallel in the superstitions of the dry reason; and the devotee, who expects miracles from a saint's bones, is not more credulous than the mesmerist, who undertakes to read a newspaper through a brick wall. If we complain of the dissensions produced by rival creeds, we are met by the more fatal disintegration effected by sceptic egotism; and must confess that the disruption of grand masses of society, as at the Reformation, is less terrible than the silent dissolution of all moral and ideal cohesion. And however monstrous the crimes into which ecclesiastical passions betray men, they are, after all, less revolting than the loathsome atrocities of periods, lost to all restraints of reverence; and even the Papacy of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries appears innocent, in comparison with the government of Asia and Greece under Alexander's successors, and of the Empire during the decline of Rome. We cannot admit that the theological turn of the present excitement in England betokens a retrograde course of civilization.

A true British Protestant, whose notions of "Popery"

are limited to what he hears from an Evangelical curate, or has seen at the opening of a Jesuit church, looks on the whole system as an obsolete mummery; and no more believes that men of sense can seriously adopt it, than that they will be converted to the practice of eating their dinner with a Chinaman's chop-sticks instead of the knife and fork. He pictures to himself a number of celibate gentlemen, who glide through a sort of minuet by candlelight around the altar, and worship the creature instead of the Creator, and keep the Bible out of everybody's way, and make people easy about their sins: and he is positive that no one above a "poor Irishman" can fail to see through such nonsense. Few even of educated Englishmen have any suspicion of the depth and solidity of the Catholic dogma, its wide and various adaptation to wants ineffaceable from the human heart, its wonderful fusion of the supernatural into the natural life, its vast resources for a powerful hold upon the conscience. We doubt whether any single Reformed Church can present a theory of religion comparable with it in comprehensiveness, in logical coherence, in the well-guarded disposition of its parts. Into this interior view, however, the popular polemics, neither give nor have the slightest insight; and hence it is a common error, both to underrate the natural power of the Romish scheme and to mistake the quarter in which it is most likely to be felt. It is not among the ignorant and vulgar, but among the intellectual and imaginative,—not by appeals to the senses in worship, but by consistency and subtlety of thought,—that in our days converts will be made to the ancient Church. We have receded far from the Reformation by length of time: the management of the controversy has degenerated: it has been debased by political passions, and turned upon the grossest external features of the case; and when a thoughtful man, accustomed to defer to historical authority, and competent to estimate moral theories as a whole, is led to penetrate beneath the surface, he is unprepared for the sight of so much

speculative grandeur, and if he have been a *mere* Anglican or Lutheran, is perhaps astonished into the conclusion, that the elder system has the advantage in philosophy and antiquity alike. From this, among other causes, we incline to think that the Roman Catholic reaction may proceed considerably further in this country ere it receives any effectual check. The academical training and the clerical teaching of the upper classes have not qualified them to resist it. At the other end of society there are large masses who cannot be considered inaccessible to any missionary influence, affectionately and perseveringly applied. Not all men, in a crowded community, are capable of the independence, the self-subsistence, without which Protestantism sinks into personal anarchy. The class of weak, dependent characters, that cannot stand alone in the struggle of life, are unprovided for in the modern system of the world. The co-operative theorist tries to take them up. But somehow or other he is usually a man with whom, by a strange fatality, co-operation is impossible; intent on uniting all men, yet himself not agreeing with any; with individuality so intense and exclusive, that it produces all the effect of intolerant self-will; and thus the very plans which by his hypothesis are inevitable, are by his temper made impracticable. He appeals, however, and successfully, to the uneasiness felt by the feeble in the strife and pressure of the world: he fills the imagination with visions of repose and sympathy: he awakens the craving for unity and incorporation in some vast and sustaining society. And whence is this desire, disappointed of its first promise, to obtain its satisfaction? Is it impossible that it may accept proposals from the most ancient, the most august, the most gigantic organization which the world has ever seen? that it may take refuge in a body which invests indigence with sanctity,—which cares for its members, one by one,—which has a real past instead of a fancied future, and warms the mind with the colouring of rich traditions,—which, in providing for the poorest

want of the moment, enrols the disciple in a commonwealth spread through all ages and both worlds? Whatever socialistic tendency may be diffused through the English mind is not unlikely, in spite of a promise diametrically opposite, to turn to the advantage of the Catholic cause. The middle classes of this country, and the foremost ranks of the artizans, have been so thoroughly cast in the Protestant mould, and so jealously vindicate their sturdy individuality, that no reaction from Rome will affect *them* with any feelings but of amazement and contempt. Still, in the peculiar combinations of the present period, materials enough exist in England for the successful operations of a well-equipped, devoted, and skilful priesthood; and if the prudence of Rome has failed her as to the *manner* of her recent advance, her true instinct has perhaps detected the right *moment*. It must be admitted that his Holiness has thoroughly puzzled the English people. It is not clear to them how they should comport themselves towards his pretensions. They have objections to arrogance at all times; and when an Italian priest meddles with their national geography, disposes of their counties, draws lines around their cities, and, fixing an admiring eye on the unfurnished cathedrals of Westminster and Beverley, supplies bishops for their future adornment, they feel inclined at least to let him know that *they* are here, and that England is not an unoccupied colony to be parcelled out among his flock. But they read Cardinal Wiseman's Appeal; and become convinced that, if anything is amiss, it is their own fault; for that, apparently, nothing has been done beyond the fair scope of law. Then it is useless to be angry, unless they alter the law: yet to repent of what they did, with a purpose of justice, and in a temper of generous trust; to recall their deliberate concession of free religious development; to resume again the detestable policy of theologic legislation,—is a course which they would feel ashamed to contemplate. Moreover, in such a course, it is equally difficult to know how to begin, and where to stop. To

legislate about mere names and titles, apart from the functions they denote, would be a helpless expression of childish irritation: to prohibit the offices themselves would be to drive a wounding law into the interior structure of the Roman Catholic Church. Were this admissible, what principle would remain to hinder the dissolution by law of the Methodist Conference, or the Free Church Synods? Yet even those who most clearly see the dangers of action at the present crisis arrive regretfully, we think, at a conclusion in favour of entire inaction. An uneasy suspicion remains, that a step made good by the Papal hierarchy introduces an unsound element into English life; that the case of the Roman Catholics is not parallel with that of the modern Nonconformists; and that, however we may ignore the red hat and the archiepiscopal title, Dr. Wiseman continues, after all, something more to the state than a "Dissenting minister." These impressions, we think, are to a certain extent wholesome and legitimate; and may be at once justified and moderated by a glance at the theory and inherent action of the Roman Church, especially in its coexistence with the state.

All *Protestant* controversies turn upon questions of *doctrine:* all Protestant sects are marked off by some peculiarity of creed; and whoever, in the conscientious exercise of his private thought, approves of the distinctive peculiarity, thereby falls into membership of the sect, which is but the voluntary concurrence of many individuals in the same confession. In the whole circle of Christian, or quasi-Christian doctrines, there is not a point which has not been looked at by some believer or other, with such intensity as to grow incandescent before his mind, to radiate a divine light upon him, and to be assumed as the centre of a system. Like the astronomer, intent on some suspected mystery in a star of inferior magnitude, he directs his soul,—turned by some special susceptibility into a powerful reflector,—towards one of the lesser lights in the great arch of faith, is dazzled by what the natural vision

can scarce discern, and suffers even neighbouring objects to remain in shade, and whole constellations of truth to lie beyond his field of view. Each sect being thus the direct result of some individuality, not even its own members pretend that its speciality is to be held up as an essential: they claim for it no other merit than that of recovering some important position from unmerited neglect. At the period of the Reformation, indeed, a different feeling prevailed. It was then thought a very serious thing to *separate* from a previous communion, and constitute a new one; and nothing short of a difference in "fundamentals" was held as a justifying plea. But the process has been so often repeated, and by protracted indulgence to individuality the religious sympathies have grown so fastidious, that distinctions even more trivial, descending from conscience to opinion, and from opinion to taste, have become familiar as demarcations of worship. Hence, to the Protestant apprehension, denominations without end may coexist within the wide embrace of Christianity; and provided the deviations do not run beyond certain ill-determined bounds, they involve no forfeiture of the Christian name. "What do these people believe?" is the question of the passer-by, as he sees the crowd streaming from the conventicle of some new sect or sectiuncle. Each Nonconformist name suggests, to those who know its history, some particular tenet or turn of thought, of which it has undertaken the guardianship:—Methodism expounds the new birth; Calvinism, the irrevocable decrees; Quakerism, the influence of the Spirit; Lutheranism, the justification by faith. Now this inveterate habit of attending exclusively to doctrines, Protestants are apt to carry into their estimates of the Romish system. They put it down among the sects of Christendom, and judge it as they would Moravianism or Presbyterianism. They accuse its worship of idolatry, and its creed of falsehood; they are offended by the apparent contrast with the simplicity of their own Scriptural or rational scheme; and yield either to all the anti-

pathies of intolerant zeal, or to the mild contempt of tolerant indifference.

Both results are equally unwarranted. If Catholicism be a superstition, that is no reason for interfering with it by law. If it is not more a superstition than Methodism, that is no proof that it is as little dangerous. Whether its solution of questions of divinity be wiser or more foolish than that of the Protestant Confessions, is a matter with which the state has no concern. It may go astray on all the topics of the Thirty-nine Articles, may blaspheme in its prayers to the "Mother of God," may be idolatrous in the mass and pagan in the ritual, without justifying the slightest legislative check. Were it heretical as Antichrist, and false as the scarlet abomination, its career should run free of the Attorney-General. Englishmen enjoy,—as inseparable from freedom of conscience,—unlimited right of error and delusion. There is (or recently was) an establishment near London for the adoration of the Vital Principle; where it is the most serious of crimes to eat beef, a deplorable infirmity to cut a cabbage, and the height of holiness to live on apples ripely dropping into the expectant aprons of devotees. The disciples of Mr. Holyoake undertake the propaganda of Atheism. The Book of Mormon succeeds among thousands in the North to all the honours of the Bible. And a nation which is wise enough to leave these things unmolested by coercive check cannot abandon its forbearance in dealing with the confessional and the eucharistic sacrifice. If the Latter-day Saints may organize their staff of "Angels," and send them, in the name of Joe Smith, to baptize converted potters and believing housemaids in the waters of every large river; the Catholics cannot, on any charge of superstition, be denied their order of bishops, for the supervision of their priesthood, and the governance of their faithful. After tolerating so much new nonsense, we have lost all plea for growing angry with the old.

If, then, we had to deal simply with a form of worship

and theology, there would be no ground for distinguishing between the case of the Catholics and that of the Dissenters. And practically, perhaps, in the actual condition of Europe, the question now in agitation might be permitted to rest there. But, in fairness to the Protestant feeling, it should never be forgotten that the Roman Catholic system presents a feature absent from every other variety of Nonconformity. It is not a RELIGION only, but a POLITY;—and this in a very peculiar sense. Other systems also,—as the Presbyterian,—include among their doctrines an opinion in favour of some particular church-government;—which opinion, however, professing to be derived from Scripture by use of private judgment, stands, in their case, on the same footing with every other article of their creed. You might differ from John Knox about Synods, without prejudice to your agreement in all else. But with the Romish Church it is different. It is not that her religion contains a Polity: but that her Polity contains the whole religion. The truths she publishes exist only as in its keeping, and rest only on its guarantee: and if you invalidate it, they would vanish, like the promissory notes of a corporation whose charter was proved false. Christianity, in her view, is not a Doctrine, productive of institutions through spontaneous action on individual minds; but an Institution, the perpetual source of doctrine for individual obedience and trust. Revelation is not a mere communication of truth, not a transitory visit of heaven to earth, ascertained by human testimony, and fixed in historical records: but a continuous Incarnation of Deity, a permanent Real Presence of the Infinite in certain selected persons and consecrated objects. The same Divine Epiphany which began with the person of the Saviour has never since abandoned the world: it exists, in all its awfulness and power, only embodied no longer in a redeeming individual, but in a redeeming Church. The word of inspiration, the deed of miracle, the authority to condemn and to forgive, remain as when Christ taught in the temple, walked on the sea, denounced the Pharisee and accepted

the penitent. These functions, as exercised by him, were only in their incipient stage: he came,—to exemplify them indeed, but chiefly to incorporate them in a Body which should hold and transmit them to the end of time. From his person they passed to the College of the Twelve, under the headship of Peter; and thence, in perpetual Apostleship, to the Bishops and Pastors, ordained through legitimate hands, for the governance of disciples. These officers are the sole depositaries, the authorized trustees, of Divine grace; whose decision, whether they open or shut the gate of mercy, is registered in heaven and is without appeal. Not that they can play with this power, and dispose of it by arbitrary will. The media through which it is to flow have been divinely appointed: its channels are limited to certain physical substances and bodily acts or postures, selected at first hand for the purpose;—water at one time, bread at another, oil at a third, handling of the head at a fourth. But the infusion of the supernatural efficacy into these "alvei" depends on an act of the appointed official; through whom alone the divine matter,—no longer choked up,—can have free currency into the persons of believers. To this inheritance of Miracle is added a stewardship of Inspiration. The Episcopate is Keeper of the Christian Records: and as those records are only the first germ of an undeveloped revelation, with the same body is left the exclusive power of unfolding their significance, and directing the growth and expansion of their ever-fertile principles. Whatever interpretation the hierarchy may put upon the Scriptures, whatever doctrine or discipline they may announce as agreeable with the mind of God, must be accepted as infallible and authoritative. The same Spirit of absolute Truth which spoke in the living voice of Christ, which guided the pen of Evangelists, still prolongs itself in the thought and counsels of bishops, and renders their collective decisions binding as divine oracles. The people who form the obedient mass of the Catholic Body are not without a share of this miraculous light in the soul; not

indeed for the discernment of any new truth, but for the apprehension of the old. The moment the disciple is incorporated in the Church, faith bursts into sight: he passes from opinion into knowledge: he perceives the objects of his worship, and the truth of his creed, with more than the certainty of sense; and as he bows before the altar, or commits himself to the "Mother of God," the Real Presence and the invisible world are as immediately with him as the Breviary and the Crucifix. Through the whole Catholic atmosphere is diffused a preternatural medium of *clairvoyance*, which at every touch of its ritual vibrates into activity, and opens to adoring view mysteries hid from minds without.*

Now, with the spiritual aspects of this theory we are not here concerned. Reason has no jurisdiction over the inspiration that transcends it. But there is a humbler task to which the common intellect is not incompetent. We may plant this system in a political community, set it down beside the state, imagine it surrounded by families, and schools, and municipalities, and parliaments, by the prison and the court of justice; within the shadow of law and in presence of sovereignty: and we may ask, how it will work amid these august symbols of a nation's life, how adjust itself in relation to them? Will it leave them to their free development? Can it tranquilly coexist with them, and be content to see them occupy the scope which English traditions and English usage have secured for them? We are convinced it cannot; that every step it may make is an encroachment upon wholesome liberty; that it is innocent only where it is insignificant, and where it is ascendant will neither part with power nor use it well; and that it must needs raise to the highest pitch the common vice of tyrannies and of democracies,—the relentless crushing of minorities.

* Adequate authority for these statements will be found in Dr. Moehler's Symbolism, Part I. Chap. V., and in Newman's Lectures, III. p. 66, and Lect. IX. *passim*.

For what is this scheme but an organized and undying attempt to establish a theocracy? The Church is not only a Heaven-appointed polity, but an imperishable incarnation of the Personal Deity; the Episcopate is the head-office of his supernatural administration; the sacraments, his occasions of audience and union with his subjects; the priests, the ministers of his court, the directors of its ceremonial, the channel of every petition and every reply. On what terms can the mere secular state live with such a companion? Those who wield the sceptre of the Most High will pay small heed to the baton of the constable. Where the Almighty reigns, what room will there be for the police magistrate?—and where Omniscience directs, for debates in parliament? What *natural* function can fail to undergo eclipse, where the mystic shadow of the *supernatural* traverses the air? True, the Catholic declares his belief in a sort of divine right vested in the civil government, and adopts the language of St. Paul, that "the powers that be are ordained of God"; and, on the strength of this, often professes a loyalty even more profuse than accords with the taste of a people who at times have had to uphold law against kingship. So, in truth, this doctrine of the state is not so lofty as it looks: for while Government and the Church are both called divine, the one is referred to the God of nature, the other to the God of grace; the one is the old mechanism of heathen corruption, the other the new economy of heavenly redemption; the one is for the coercion of enemies to the kingdom of Christ, the other for the guidance of friends; and *who* are enemies, *who* friends, the Church alone can tell. The result is inevitable. The civil power, however extolled as similar in origin and anterior in date, is treated, after all, as subordinate in authority, and bound to place itself and its sword at the disposal of the ecclesiastical order. Its highest honour and perfection is to play the part of censor and avenger, jailer and executioner, for the offended sacerdotal sanctities. Its province is to do the rough work, to undertake the odious

necessities, which saintly hearts are too tender to behold, and saintly hands too clean to touch. Spiritual men cannot work at the forge and rivet chains, but only point to the limbs that are to bear them: they cannot teach sword exercise, but only name the crusade where it might serve a holy end: they are unacquainted with worldly finance, but can mention to the magistrate what sum would be useful, and meditate within themselves the purposes to which it shall be applied. Where the *theocratic* pretension prevails, it is idle to suppose that another supreme jurisdiction, resting on a mere human basis, can peaceably coexist with it. Professedly destitute of divine direction, undefended from passion and error, how can the inferior function sustain itself against the boundless grasp and grandeur of the superior? Well is it called, in the language of ecclesiastics, the secular "*arm*." As surely as the body obeys the mind, and the nimble hand or heavy fist follows the keenness of thought or the shock of rage, must the temporal power, in every sacerdotal state, sink into the mere instrument of spiritual subtlety and anointed indignation. In proportion as it assumes a truly independent action, and insists on the supremacy of law, the Church considers itself injured, complains of the arrogance of the princes of this world, and puts on that air of hurt innocence which is the favourite disguise of the intensest pride. Hear, for instance, the affecting statement by Father Newman, of the hard lot of the true Church, from the disturbing vicinity of the State.

"The Church is a sovereign and self-sustaining power, in the same sense in which any temporal state is such. She is sufficient for herself; she is absolutely independent in her own sphere; she has irresponsible control over her subjects in religious matters; she makes laws for them of her own authority, and enforces obedience on them as the tenure of their membership in her communion. And you know, in the next place, that the very people who are her subjects, are in another relation the State's subjects, and that those very matters which,

in one aspect, are spiritual, in another are secular. The very same persons and the very same things belong to two supreme jurisdictions at once, so that the Church cannot issue any order but it affects the persons and the things of the State, nor can the State issue any order without its affecting the persons and the things of the Church. Moreover, though there is a general coincidence between the principles on which civil and ecclesiastical welfare respectively depend, as proceeding from one and the same God, who has given power to the magistrate as well as to the priest, yet there is no necessary coincidence in their particular application and resulting details, just as the good of the soul is not always the good of the body; and much more is this the case, considering there is no divine direction promised to the State, to preserve it from human passion and human selfishness. Under these circumstances, it is morally impossible that there should not be continual collision, or chance of collision, between the State and the Church; and considering the State has the power of the sword, and the Church has no arms but such as are spiritual, the problem to be considered by us is, how the Church may be able to do her divinely appointed work without molestation or seduction from the State. . . . . If the State would but keep within its own province, it would find the Church its truest ally and best benefactor. She upholds obedience to the magistrate; she recognizes his office as from God; she is the preacher of peace, the sanction of law, the first element of order, and the safeguard of morality, and that without possible vacillation or failure; she may be fully trusted; she is a sure friend, for she is indefectible and undying. But it is not enough for the State that things should be done, unless it has the doing of them; it abhors a double jurisdiction, and what it calls a divided allegiance; *aut Cæsar aut nullus*, is its motto, nor does it willingly accept of any compromise. All power is founded, as it is often said, on public opinion; to allow the existence of a collateral and rival authority, is to weaken its own; and though that authority never showed its presence by collision, but ever concurred and co-operated in the acts of the State, yet the divinity with which the State would fain hedge itself would, in the minds of men, be concentrated on that ordinance of God which has the higher claim to it."—pp. 144-146.

Simple people imagine that theocratic claims are harmless, because they refer only to spiritual matters. Cardinal Wiseman assures the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, that he does not covet their Abbey, or begrudge their revenues, or dream of meddling with their congregation. He only wants to be a city missionary, and carry light and consolation into noisome courts and alleys, where the Protestant influence cannot penetrate. He and his episcopal brethren have no other function than to see that the "poor Irish" say their prayers, — that the priests are diligent in their calling,—that the altars have clean cloths, and the broken crucifixes get repaired. They administer in a kingdom that is not of this world; and never can quit their quiet sphere to enter into the affairs of civil life. Human interests and institutions are no more in danger from them than from the angels in heaven. We believe this to be said in perfect good faith, from the Catholic point of view; and for the hour to be true even from the Protestant. But before we concede, upon this plea, the demand of every church to perfect autonomy,—before we turn away with the careless assurance that these clerical matters are no affairs of ours,—it might be well to know how and where the line is to be drawn between temporal and spiritual things. Even in the Reformed churches, this boundary has been a topic of serious dispute. They have all declared that the kingdom they aspired to find was not of this world. Yet Calvin made laws in Geneva, about the dress of brides and the ringing of bells; employed the police to drive the inhabitants to church; shut up the theatres, carried off the fashionable from the masquerade to bridewell, issued warrants against dancing, and rendered it felony to question the dogmas or criticize the preaching of his party. John Knox contended, that, "to the Civil Magistrate specially appertained the ordering and reformation of religion," and the Reformers of Edinburgh, in 1560, made the repeated celebration of the mass punishable with death. The zeal of the Free Church of Scotland

for the "crown rights of the Redeemer," (that is, for the irresponsibility of the clergy,) has rendered impossible its friendly alliance with the State. But the very nature of the Protestant system presents a limit to these inconveniences:—First, its doctrine is not sacerdotal; it pretends to no secret magic all its own: its appeal is popular; it rouses the conscience of men in masses, instead of practising on their weakness one by one. Secondly, it looks on the world as so lost to God, that no evangelical men can mix themselves much with its affairs. From their spiritual position, they see it across a vast chasm, dividing the opposite poles of destiny: they communicate with it as with an alien, if not a hostile land; where no province lies which it is given them to rule. A realm, therefore, always remains as the proper theatre of temporal sway. They may mark its boundary wrong, but they mark it somewhere. But on the Catholic map of this universe, no such line is found at all; or if it seems to be there, it is but as the shadow of a window-frame, throwing its bar across the sheet, and shifting as the sun of ecclesiastic glory rises or declines. What is temporal in England is spiritual in Spain; what belongs to the kingdoms of this world in the nineteenth century, belonged to the kingdom of heaven in the sixteenth. *De jure*, the divine commission extends to every thing, and might absorb this planet into the Papal state; *de facto*, it includes what it can, and stops where it must. In Paris, the Archbishop celebrates high-mass to orders from an Algerine General, or the Prefect of Police, and bestows his pliant benediction on King or Revolutionary hero. In Turin a law is passed to render ecclesiastics amenable to the civil courts: the high dignitaries of the Church refuse obedience: to the minister of state who proposed the law, they deny, on his last bed, the rites of his religion, and he dies unshriven: Rome supports them in their resistance, and they are now in exile or in prison for preferring their vows to their allegiance. To recède with passive resistance in every step, to advance with

active pressure in every open direction, is the policy of a priesthood that never dies. The city and territory of Rome itself exhibit perfectly the result to which the Catholic distinction between the civil and the spiritual departments will reduce itself, when let alone. There, the Pope is Monarch, as well as Primate, and can divide the offices as he will: and there, the temporal functionaries consist of the soldiery and the police. This narrow restriction of the business of the government, which is there brought about by the ascendency of the priesthood, may be elsewhere partially produced by the freedom of the people. The larger the range of life that is left to individual self-direction, the less does there remain for public law to take up, and the more limited will be the work of public rule. During the last thirty years, there has been, till lately, a constant retreat of legislation from its interference with the private will: from the press, from commerce, from litigation, from religion, restrictions have been removed; and the notion has become current, that the State has nothing to do but to protect "body and goods." So long as such an idea retains its influence, and government attempts no more than to stop theft and keep the peace, it can scarce come into collision with any priesthood, and no apprehension of any interference will exist: the two rivals are for the time on different walks, and will not meet. The vicar apostolic does not aspire to be constable, or the lord-lieutenant to perform extreme unction. But the time comes of inevitable reaction against our exaggerated trust in individual self-guidance: fever and pauperism in cities, sullen indigence in the country, excessive work in factories, and juvenile ignorance everywhere, compel us, as a community, to enlarge our aims and embrace some moral ends. Reformatory discipline is attempted in the prison; industrial training in the Poor Law Unions; public grants are made for education; and in Ireland, first, common schools, next, lay colleges, are created under sanction of Parliament. No sooner does this nobler statesmanship

begin to take effect, than the politician is told that he is trespassing on the churchman's ground. Who but the priest can undertake the "cure of souls"? Who but he distinguish their medicine from their poison? Who else has a right to care about God's poor? Are the Catholic youth to read history without a spiritual guide at their elbow, to tell them whom to canonize and whom to hate? —and to learn geology without the art of squeezing the ages within orthodox dimensions?—and to study astronomy without warning from the contumacy of Galileo? No; vested interests of the holiest kind preoccupy the territory of knowledge: no plough shall touch, no harvest insult, its special right of eternal barrenness: it is the τέμενος of a God: only sacred cattle shall graze there; and every intruder be taken to the sacrifice. And so, amid a pageantry and with a secrecy fitted to mystify a deed of darkness, the Irish Episcopate hold a Synod at Thurles; resolve to quench the best light of promise that for many a generation has been lifted above the storm of faction; and surmising, with sure instinct, that what brings the nation to port must bring the priesthood to wreck, they repent of the prospect of repose, and steer the vessel right back into the tempest. The colleges where Protestant and Catholic may meet in the class-room, and find that they are made of the same stuff, and feel the blending flames of the same generous enthusiasm; where science cannot be bewildered, or history suborned; where Rome under the Republic may be compared to Rome under the Primacy, and natural politics appear beside the supernatural; where tastes may grow up too heroic for the sacerdotal type of saintship,—are denounced as "godless": their condemnation is procured from the chair of St. Peter; and the project is set on foot of an exclusive university, where no heretic step shall ever tread, and the mediæval measures of nature and standards of truth shall be supreme. We trust that the government will patiently uphold these colleges; and will so give to the Catholic laity the

opportunity of proving, that the ecclesiastical demand upon their obedience may be over-strained; that they will not lay down at the feet of a confessor their duties as parents and as citizens; and that they will put to a practical test Lord Beaumont's regretful assertion, "The Church of Rome admits of no moderate party among the laity: moderation in respect to her ordinances is lukewarmness, and the lukewarm she invariably spews out of her mouth." The crusade commenced against the colleges is now spreading, it is said, to the national schools. When they were first established, it was at the expense of a monopoly previously enjoyed by the members of the Protestant Establishment; and encountering the bitter hostility of the clergy, they were accepted as a boon by the priests. But now the times are changed: through the perseverance of government and the patient energy of Archbishop Whately, the prejudices of his Church have given way; and in the local administration and working of the system, religious parties are becoming equalized. At this symptom the priesthood begin to show signs of restiveness: to the Catholic imagination, mere equality of privilege has grown flat and lost its charm; and schools for many hundred children are deserted and closed, because the parish priest is not made visitor. And so, in proportion as legislation rises above matters of police, and interposes to the check ills of neglected private obligation, in proportion as it lets the stiffness of a pedantic economy give way a little to natural humanity, and attempts beneficent prevention instead of posthumous infliction,—just therefore when it begins to interest the moral feeling of the nation, and attest the growth of higher sentiments,—does the altar appear to bar the way, and the priest declares that all within the rail is his. At the moment and in the act of aspiring to a nobler life, the State is blocked out and spurned as most profane. So has it always been with that proud Church: and so must it ever be. Yet, strange to say, all this may be without fault, without pride, in

individuals. It involves no reproach to private believers or to official guides. They are entangled in a net whose threads have shot out fibres into their wills, and penetrated the very substance of their souls. What, indeed, is a man struggling in a Theocracy, but as an insect in the waters of a cataract? He has become part of a mightier element, and must drift whither it will sweep. The arrogance of Rome is something impersonal: it is a function of her organism, a law of her ecclesiastic life. It utters itself alike from the lips of the meekest and the most insolent of her prelates; and whether acting through the energy of Hildebrand, the frivolity of Leo the Tenth, or the saintly virtues of Pius the Fifth, never permits you to forget the "Vicar of Christ." It is in the very atmosphere of her traditions. Like the wind which, in crossing the ocean, distils its surface, taking up the pure water and leaving the brine; these traditions, sweeping over the ages, absorb every glory and omit all the shame; and the temper which they nourish is the accumulated product of a history which forgets no victory and dwells on no defeat. But the social operation of this spirit is not alleviated by its absence as a personal disposition, from the individual heart. It cannot be untrue to its tendency. A system pledged to solitary and universal empire; engaged to see nothing, hear nothing, upon God's earth, except itself, and the subjects given for its sway; bound to blot out all countries from the map, and all ages from Christian history, which do not bear witness to its unity and majesty,—can make terms with no rival, and endure no equal. Others are free, when only not oppressed; but this feels itself a slave, till it is lord of all.

What, then, is the political inference to be drawn from this theocratic character in the Roman Church? Have we been supplying premisses for a no-popery conclusion? Not so;—unless the canons of Exeter-Hall logic are henceforth to be the rules of English statesmanship; and a fickle cowardice to take place of that noble courage with which,

in many a danger, the English people have dared to be just. Ambition in a sect, and exclusiveness in a creed, are good reasons for not arming them with special power, and trusting them with political privilege; but no reason at all for withholding from them civil equality, or imposing coercive limits on the spontaneous development of their religious institutions. No one thinks of insisting on humility of mind as a condition of the franchise, or denying the alderman's gown except to the shoulders of modest innocence: and as little can we make the temper of a Church a qualifying ground of its civil freedom. The religious liberties which have been won, through the cost and struggle of two centuries, would not be worth a twelvemonth's purchase, were they held on no tenure of immutable justice, but only during *theological good behaviour*. Shall it be said that, in passing the great Emancipation Act, the British legislature mistook the nature of the Romish system, and fancied it a meek affair, like Quakerism? Is the Catholic religion so new a thing that its character, obscure in 1829, wakes up into wild surprise in 1850? If there is any thing in history known by the attestation of unbroken experience, if any thing deep-cut into the memorials of British life by the graver of the nation's resolve and agony, surely it is the lofty pretensions and the sleepless patience of the Church "one and indivisible." Had this been a secret twenty years ago, the removal of Catholic disabilities would lose not only every noble, but every respectable feature; and would be degraded from an act of legislative rectitude to the level of a defeated bargain, or an extorted boon. But it was no secret: the repeated Parliamentary debates, the protracted controversies between the established and the disabled communions, had long brought out every feature of the case; and nothing was done but with open eyes. It was fully intended to take all the risks of a just course, and to leave to the Roman Catholics the undisturbed advantage of any arrogance or weakness, any policy or success, any mitre, pallium, or title, for which room might

be found within the limits of the law. We have seen nothing to convince us that the appointment of the new Catholic hierarchy involves the violation, or even the slightest straining, of the law: and it may now be fairly presumed that Mr. Bowyer's pamphlet, in which the legal aspects of the case are strikingly presented,—is felt to be unanswerable.* The Papal brief, then, is valid for its end: the bishops it appoints are already *there*, lawfully accosted by their titles, and exercising supervision over the clergy of their dioceses:—no prosecution can disturb them:—if they are to be deprived, it must be by act of Parliament; but what could be the provisions of such an act? Is it to prevent the Roman Catholics from having bishops?—to say that their Church must cease to be episcopal? This would be tantamount to an absolute proscription of their religion; which, as we have shown, is essentially a polity, and, apart from the prelatical element, can have no existence. It is a mockery of toleration to permit people to believe in a divine corporation, and then refuse them the corporate officers. Or is it to allow the bishops, but to make restrictive rules as to what they shall be *called?* This being the most simply vexatious course, enough to show a petty temper, not enough to touch the distribution of real power, is most likely, we fear, to be thought soothing to the English clergy, and to be offered to them as adapted to their taste. It were better, we think, to leave them unsoothed than to bring British legislation into contempt. Or, finally, is it to allow both bishops and their names, but to control their nomination from Rome, and in some way insist that their origin be indigenous, and their dependence

* Sir E. Sugden's opinion has since been given, against the legality of the Papal procedure, so far as the *publication* of the Letter Apostolic is concerned. The offence, however, is against a law which has been stripped of its penalties; and is apparently constituted, not by the substantive act of creating and allocating the new hierarchy, but by the formal error of publishing the instrument through which this is done. If so, prosecution may touch some *person*, but cannot affect the *thing*.

insular? On political grounds, this is the only measure for which a plausible excuse can be urged. It might be plausibly said to the Roman Catholics, "You shall have every liberty enjoyed by any subject of these realms: no one advantage shall Methodist or Baptist possess over you: whatever the largest exigencies of religious freedom have been defined by your countrymen to include, shall be secured to you. If you are content to stand on an equality with them, no prejudice shall disturb your position: but your demands go beyond theirs: no sect before ever asked to have a body of ruling officers distributed over the country, owing their appointment and their spiritual allegiance to a foreign power. If the Pope should fall under the ascendency of cabinets unfriendly to England, what security have we that unpatriotic influences may not be poured through the channels of power, thus ramifying to our poorest population? Insulate yourselves, like other Nonconformists, and your faith shall be absolutely free. But at present you require, under the name of *religion*, a privilege which every one else would esteem *political*."

This argument, however, is not applicable as against the admission of the new hierarchy. For, if you sweep that hierarchy away, you only reinstate the Vicars Apostolic, whose Papal dependence is even more close, and more open to the objection urged, than that of the provincial episcopate. Must we go further, then, and cut off the organic connection with Rome in every form? Desirable or not, the thing is simply impossible. Without the living connection with their Head, the members of the Catholic Church cannot subsist as parts of a spiritual body: and to require them—either by electing their bishops or by vesting their allocation in an English High-priest—to form themselves into a detached Church, is only to insist on their becoming apostates. No doubt, they ask more than satisfies the Dissenter; but it is not optional with them to do this or to take the humbler place. They cannot shut up within the four seas a Church, whose universality, whose identity

with entire Christendom, whose bounden allegiance to the chair of St. Peter, is the prime article of their belief. They must either enjoy, then, this larger liberty than others, or they must have none at all. While their altars remain open, and hundreds of priests daily appear at matins and vespers, no choice remains but between open and clandestine communication with Rome; and if there be contingent political danger in a foreign connection, that danger is not likely to be lessened when the correspondence is maintained, in the style of a conspiracy, between an offended Pontiff and a disaffected English and Irish people.

With our eye, then, full upon the inevitable tendencies of the Romish system; with the conviction that it generates a state of mind at variance with the English standard of civil and religious liberty; with the certain knowledge, that the equal and tolerant treatment it receives it will never, in its place and day of power, be willing to reciprocate,—we yet say to our fellow-countrymen, Be just, and fear not: put not your trust in coercive laws: dream not that divine truth can be bought with the coin of human injury: be resolved, if ever you have to defend your own rights from encroachment, to enter the field without reproach. The free mind and the large heart, in yourselves and your children, will be a surer charm against the priest and the canon law, than preventive statutes or an outcry for the Queen's supremacy.

And this last phrase, this "Queen's supremacy," brings us to the real source of most of the zeal, and of all the confusion, so conspicuous in the present anti-Papal excitement. We have hitherto treated the question as if it seriously lay between the Roman Catholic body and the British nation. But the real quarrel is felt to be between the Papal and the Anglican headships, and between the rival Episcopates proceeding from them and now existing side by side. Whoever sees, in the vehemence of the storm now raging, a comforting proof of the Protestant spirit of the English Establishment, puts a very false reading

on the signs of the times. We do not hesitate to say, that, in one aspect, it is the strongest symptom which has appeared since the time of the Stuarts of the profoundly sacerdotal* character of our Church, and its intense alienation from the Reformed religion. For whence, and on what occasion, is this mighty outburst of indignation? Does it break forth on the appearance of some devastating *heresy*, and take some glorious and threatened *truth* under the protection of its enthusiasm? Not at all: no alarming doctrine, no insidious book, no new missionary of error, has been introduced into the land: the people believe to-day what they believed three months ago: no fresh agency, not so much as a single priest, has been added to the powers of "perversion" existing before. Nay, the experience of seventeen years, during which the so-called "Anglican" movement has been going on, has shown with what patience every distinctive feature of the Pontifical creed and discipline might be contemplated; how complacently bishops could negotiate with these, how meekly endure the new grandeur they conferred, so long as the oracle came from Oxford, not from Rome, and the apostolic glory, exposed to no competition, enjoyed the monopoly at home. Nearly two thousand clergymen passed silently into the English Church, to teach everything Roman, except the Primacy of Rome; and the services of this powerful ambuscade against the march and fortresses of the Reformation, are quietly accepted in every diocese of the land: twelve Romish priests do but change their title and their dress, and the whole bench of bishops is convulsed. Why is this? and what means the language in which the change is

* Throughout this paper we use the word "Priest," not loosely, as merely equivalent to "Minister," but in the proper hieratic sense, to denote a person who interposes himself between man and God, and claims to be the indispensable medium of their effectual communication. This idea must be carried into all the kindred words, "sacerdotal," "pontifical"; and, with the needful modification, into the word "altar" as opposed to "communion-table."

denounced as an "aggression," a "usurpation," an "invasion"? "Usurpation" is the violent seizure of power from the sole rightful possessor; and when such an act is charged, it implies that the accuser is smarting under the feelings of *injured legitimacy*. The anger of the clergy arises from their holding the very same doctrine with their opponents; viz., that on the same spot there cannot be more than one bishop; that, if two appear, one or the other must be a pretender, and must be got rid of, unless both are to become ridiculous; that the very nature of their office is lost if the title be distributed. If the episcopal form of Church government were held simply as the best human contrivance for maintaining the order of a Christian community, there would be no conceivable reason why one denomination after another should not be thought free to adopt it; and those who admired it would naturally rejoice to see their own judgment and preference confirmed by the concurrence and practice of other bodies of disciples. That the opposite feeling prevails, convicts our Church of holding Episcopacy as a supernatural institution, and of claiming the very same perpetual apostleship which is maintained by the Romish theory. In a new bishop is seen, not a superintendent of a separate class of religious societies, but a rival assertor of the same indivisible authority. What now does that authority include? The exclusive possession of all the means of grace; the sole power of transmitting the Holy Spirit; the nomination of trustees for the divine sacraments, of stewards of absolution and the remission of sins. The sacerdotalism of the English Church is as absolute as that of the Roman. It matters little whether the sacraments be more or fewer; whether their *modus operandi* be a little more subjective or a little more objective; whether the right to absolve be used with the healthy or only with the sick,—so long as a ritual purification of human nature is pronounced indispensable, and the patent right to effect it is conceded by a *jus divinum* to a certain body of men, the whole mischief of the Papal

scheme remains. The disconnection from Rome simply renders the evil provincial instead of universal; but the malady, by becoming insular instead of continental, does not abate its danger. In every form and in every degree, mediatorial persons intrusted with mediatorial substances, and standing with supernatural incantations between man and God, are perilous to the well-being of the State. They occupy a position above the law: they constitute a polity distinct from the civil organization, and are never content till it is subordinated to their ends. No statesman can expect ecclesiastic peace till every trace of priestly doctrine is removed from the formularies of the Church, as it already is from the heart of the nation; and the sacramental offices retained from the Pontifical Church be reduced to the simply memorial rites of the Helvetic Reformation. No clergy can expect free action in alliance with the State, so long as they claim functions involving the irresponsible supremacy of their order. On the theological evidence of the sacerdotal system, we pronounce no opinion, but of its political bearings there can scarcely be a doubt:—it disqualifies any religion for being the *established* religion. It would be difficult for any government to take the twelve Apostles into its pay, were they living in Europe now. Their miraculous gifts and the movements of their inspiration would spurn the conditions imposed by a Chancellor of the Exchequer or a Minister of Public Instruction. Parliamentary committees on their missionary expenses, and blue-book reports on their *χαρίσματα*, would seem an intolerable indignity: Mr. Roebuck would be a thorn in the flesh, and Mr. Bright a messenger of Satan to buffet them. It cannot be otherwise with apostolic men, like Henry of Exeter and the holy Incumbent of St. Barnabas. Charged in this world with a divine mission, they are above being judged by man's judgment; and, before the tribunal of the nation, feel like Christ before the bar of Pilate. Trustees of a supernatural endowment, and in its disposal acting as organs of the Holy Ghost, they can

make no terms with secular men, who think, like Simon Magus, "that the gift of God may be purchased with money." Agents of a heavenly polity for ruling the souls of men, they are bound, by paramount obligation, to guard and administer the precise form of dogma committed to them; receiving it pure from the Church, and neither judging it themselves, nor suffering others to judge it. This class of ecclesiastics are very provoking to the statesman. They appear perverse and obstinate. He cannot moderate them: with a nucleus of incomprehensible pride covered by a surface of unctuous meekness, they slip through his fingers and pursue their course. His canons of reason and theirs are hopelessly at variance: their respective modes of thought never meet; and the longer they negotiate, the less do they agree. The statesman, less enduring than the ecclesiastic, and wielding the keen instruments of decisive coercion, grows angry, and cuts short the controversy by an ultimatum of obedience or exclusion. He can do nothing else, without betraying the best interests of the nation. Yet we must say, that in being subjected to his ban, and held up to the indignation of the people, the Anglicans are very hardly used. It is a shameful tyranny to retain their doctrine in the Prayer-book, and then abuse them for believing it; to bind them by solemn engagement to a sacerdotal theory, and then lose all temper when they reduce it to practice; to say to them as each enters his office, "Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained," and then be offended at their lofty airs. It is undeniable that the sacramental and priestly doctrine embodied in the Anglican movement is fully authorized by the formularies of the Church, and that no clergyman who disbelieves it can have given a veracious "assent and consent," "willingly and *ex animo*," "to all things contained in them." There is no more ground for charging dishonesty on the Anglican party than on the Evangelical. Each finds its justification in a part,—neither in the whole,—of the Liturgy and Articles of

the Church: but the Anglicans being in the minority, and tending in a direction with which the nation does not sympathize, are treated with opprobrium as traitors to the faith. We believe them to be the most pernicious men of all within the compass of the Church; but also the most sincere, the most learned, the most self-denying; the most faithful, intellectually and morally, to the ecclesiastical training which has been provided for them. Had it been possible for them to win over the majority of the nation to their views, and had logical considerations any weight with the tribunal of popular opinion, they would have been regarded, not as the insidious corrupters of the Church, but as the consistent restorers of its characteristic principles. Their fate is determined by historical combinations, rather than by any essential principle of justice. But in sacrificing them, let no wrong be done: let the act be one, not of disgrace upon persons, but of preference for a principle: let the expulsion be, of priesthood from the Prayer-book, not of priests from the altars they have served. In driving them to the Vatican, the Church which has nurtured them in Romish tastes, committed them to Romish pretension, and shut them up in a University the very focus of mediæval revival, owes them some reparation: nor could she present a more fitting apology than the erasure from her own system of every line that has misled these erring sons.

Unless this be done, and the State decisively refuses to recognize the Church as a *supernatural* corporation, the evil will perpetually recur. The demand for ecclesiastical supremacy and independence, however dangerous, is irresistibly reasonable, if the Church be the holder of a commission, and the performer of a work which no human power can touch. Concede this claim, and the national control becomes a manifest tyranny; and if the control be optional the claim must be denied. Hence the emphasis with which all "Churchmen" dwell on the treasure of "dogma and sacraments" consigned to the guardianship of the

Church; and on the right, thence arising, of a lofty bearing towards the temporal power.

"The State claims the allegiance of its subjects on the ground of the tangible benefits of which it is the instrument towards them. Its strength lies in this undeniable fact, and they endure and they maintain its coercion and its laws, because the certainty of this fact is ever present to their minds. What mean the array and the pomp which surround the sovereign? the strict ceremonial, the minute etiquette, the almost unsleeping watchfulness which eyes her every motion, which follows her into her garden and her chamber, which notes down every shade of her countenance, and every variation of her pulse? Why do her soldiers hover about her, and officials line her ante-rooms, and cannon and illuminations carry forward her progresses among the people? Is this all a mockery? Is it done for nothing? Surely not; in her is centred the order, the security, the happiness of a great people. And, in like manner, the Church must be the guardian of a fact: she must have something to produce, she must have something to do. It is not enough to be keeper of even an inspired book; for there is nothing to show that her protection of it is necessary at this day. The State might fairly commit its custody to the art of printing, and dissolve an institution whose occupation was no more. She must do that, in order to have a meaning, which otherwise cannot be done; which she alone can do. She must have a benefit to bestow, in order to be worth her existence; and the benefit must be a fact which no one can doubt about. It must not be an opinion, or matter of opinion, but a something which is like a first principle, which may be taken for granted,—a foundation indubitable and irresistible. In other words, she must have a dogma and sacraments: it is a *dogma and sacraments*, and nothing else, which can give meaning to a Church, or sustain her against the State; for by these are meant certain facts or acts which are special instruments of spiritual good to those who receive them. As we do not gain the benefits of civil society unless we submit to its laws and customs, so we do not gain the spiritual blessings which the Church has to bestow upon us unless we receive her dogmas and her sacraments."—*Newman's Lectures*, p. 178.

This is the pretended basis of the English, no less than

of the Roman Church. The pretence is palpably false; all consistent teaching being utterly lost, the sacraments having become the centres of heretical disputes, and the inconsistencies of the formularies laid open to public exposure. The Act of Uniformity, it is now confessed, enforces a heterogenous congeries of theological propositions with no organic unity, held together by no higher bond than the printer's frame of types, and incapable of coexisting in any mind of logical grasp and moral earnestness to use it; and the only uniformity which it secures among the clergy, beyond the weekly monotony upon the ear, is that of invariable self-contradiction, of partial unveracity, and bitter mutual aversions. Nevertheless, absurd as the pretence is, of a supernatural trust of dogma in the keeping of our ecclesiastics, it has not been relieved of its mischief in being bereft of its truth. It operates powerfully against the most salutary and moderate reforms. It refuses to recognize the fact, impressed on the whole course of history and necessitated by the very constitution of the human mind, that religious faith cannot be made immutable except under the humiliating condition of universal ignorance and apathy; but requires, from time to time, new intellectual forms for its sincere expression. It affects to shrink from every doctrinal modification, as the breach of an eternal trust, and, to evade the confession of fallibility, will repeal nothing even of what has passed into desuetude or disgust. This hollow profession of an unreal unity and fixedness most unfavourably influences the character and culture of the clergy. The national life of England has been particularly productive of fresh and eccentric varieties of religious activity, which the sturdy realism and moral energy of her people have not left to be frittered away in speculation or to sleep in books, but have pushed forward to take the command of events. From the Precisians of Queen Elizabeth's reign to the Free Church believers of Queen Victoria's, there has been a series of intellectual movements connected with religion, so important

as to colour the whole complexion of our history. But as these have, for the most part, been suffered to take place *outside* the Church, they are not in favour with the clergy; and whatever part of the infection of change has spread at times to the interior, is so disturbing to the theory of a doctrinal stewardship, that the periods marked by it lie under disgrace. The clerical habit, therefore, is to ignore the entire existence of Nonconformity; to treat it precisely as the Pope now treats the established schism; to walk through history like a coxcomb through a ball-room, eyeing his nearest neighbours as if he had never seen them, and looking another way when an inconvenient acquaintance approaches. By rights, he appears to think, such people have no business to be there at all: *he* would never have allowed it, had it rested with him: but the admissions were settled at St. Stephen's; and with such a miscellaneous committee of management as that, one cannot be surprised at anything. Often, indeed, it may well happen that the clergyman has only an obscure and hearsay belief in the reality of Dissenters. His father, the rector of a country place, "never allowed them in his parish." At Oxford, the phenomenon was invisible, and never mentioned. In his studies, the youth had never been referred to any Nonconformist books, though, in getting up the history of heresies, he had heard of some great discomfitures inflicted on them by orthodox bishops. And now he is curate in a village, from which, a month before he came, the only Dissenter,—a Baptist cobbler,—had removed, because there was no school but the "National," and he would not let his children learn the Church Catechism. And so, of the stirring religious life of the conventicle, which gathers into it so much middle-class energy, and still more of the *unreligious* and alienated life of the classes below this, the academic Churchman knows nothing. Unless his lot be cast in a large town, he lives in a social world where he is little disturbed by the new spirit of the present century, and where he may cherish

the ideas of an obsolete generation. Nor is it only in his narrow view of his own time that the professional perversion is seen: it corrupts still more conspicuously his estimates of the past, and generates historical tastes dishonourable to men of English birth. Dreaming of dogmatic unity as the indispensable mark of the Church, and finding no clear and steady traces of it in the last three centuries, nor much pretence of it, except in the Romish and Anglican communions, he carries all his admirations up, along the narrow path of Episcopacy, into the mediæval period, and through it to the dreary ages when ecclesiastic consolidation took up the crumbling Empire of the West. The august image of an indivisible Christendom, instructed by the Fathers, represented by the Councils, ruled by the Head of the Church, accompanies and fascinates him; and we know of no preconception so powerful as this to pervert all history, to spoil all purity and manliness of taste, and to produce a state of mind uncongenial with what is noblest in the actual life of this nineteenth century. He sees, upon a writer the most mean and tedious, the *imprimatur* of ecclesiastical adoption, and wastes upon him the reverence due to thought and genius. He allows dogmatic grounds to determine all his judgments of human character and literary merit: the silliness of Epiphanius escapes him, lest a needful witness be lost: for fear of encouraging Jovinian, Jerome's fanatic passions must have their way: the apprehension of Arius makes everything in Athanasius "great"; and the presence of Pelagius excuses Augustine's persecuting zeal. The bald grossness of the Ambrosian hymns is extolled for simplicity and grandeur; and the conceits of Marbod and Hildebert, for poetic richness and fertility. Anselm becomes the model of a philosopher; Aquinas, of a theologian; and Bernard, of a saint. Kings and emperors are estimated, not by their capacity and virtues, but by their orthodoxy: Constantine, the murderer of all his kindred, Theodosius, who desolated the streets of Antioch and Thessalonica with frightful and almost

gratuitous massacres, are applauded as "great," because they were prodigal to the clergy, and merciless to heretics. In every contest between the ecclesiastical and temporal power, the "Churchman's" sympathies go with the former, and, without regard to any merits of the dispute, he visibly glories in the abasement of the crown before the mitre: it is a triumph to him, that to the family of Valentinian the Second, and to the Emperor himself, because he was an Arian, every church in Milan was denied, and from the Basilica the chant of St. Ambrose, ceaseless by night or day, defied the soldiers of the prince; and he loves to read how Becket extorted penance from the king. But above all, he holds in greatest antipathy the whole system of influences under which the constitutional liberties of modern England have been matured. The Reformation under Luther and Melancthon, Calvin and Zwingle, is contemptuously disclaimed as a vulgar insurrection of private judgment; so that any sympathy with Continental Protestantism has long become the recognized mark of a Dissenter. The whole cluster of modern churches is swept scornfully away, with the pedantic remark, that they are only a reproduction by ignorant men of the ancient heresies; over which orthodoxy, supernaturally triumphant once, will return in full tide again. English Churchmen describe the Presbyterianism of the North, as "that form of schism which is established in Scotland." New literary idols are set up even among the writers of their own communion, and many of the older potentates dethroned. Of the elder divines, the High-Churchmen are alone in favour, Andrewes and Laud, Jackson and Cosin; and of the more recent, the nonjurors awaken the strongest interest, Brett, and Ken, and Beveridge.

The praises of such men as Ridley and Parkhurst, who would have brought Zurich and London into the fraternity of a common reformation, are no longer heard. Tillotson, having proposed a scheme of large-hearted comprehension, is regarded as a traitor to the primacy which

he adorned. And in proportion as any divine has enlarged his range as a theologian on the side of philosophy, he is set aside, with Cudworth and Clarke, as a miserable latitudinarian. In regard to every political struggle by which the nation has obtained fresh guarantees of civil liberty or made a new step in religious toleration, it is fashionable for "good Churchmen" in our days to sympathize with the doctrines of servility and oppression. Clarendon himself could find no fault with the modern clerical view of "the Great Rebellion"; and the settlement in 1688 is regarded as the ill-omened commencement of that fatal series of changes by which, through the removal of tests, Parliament has become a medley of heresies, and the Church been laid prostrate before Quakers, Papists, and Socinians. In our literature, there is scarce a name venerable to the popular ear, which is ever mentioned by this class of men without a gloss of disparagement. Milton, unfortunately, was neither orthodox nor prelatist. Locke set the fashion of that presumptuous reliance on experience, which is the root of all infidelity; and brought into vogue that sophistical "toleration," which amounts to "total indifference to all objective truth." Bunyan is abandoned to the coarser imagination of the Noncomformist, while Thomas-à-Kempis is fitter for the pocket of an Anglican. The world could better have spared Adam Smith than have suffered the dreadful blights of Political Economy. This sort of taste, which for twenty years has been fostered in the University Churchman, sets him down as a stranger in this trading, bustling, practical England. He looks with simple alarm and aversion on the characteristic life of the age, its vast material development, its irresistible and crushing growth of mechanism, physical and human, its swarming towns, its distracting mills, its noisy agitations, its teeming press, its chaos of beliefs and unbeliefs. In the days of Queen Bess, it was not thought unfitting for religious men to share in the national pride awakened by expanding prosperity and

power: but in our time an ecclesiastical cant has arisen against all the marking features and moral results of the immense productive power and commercial complications of the empire. We are not blind to the embarrassing social problems springing out of these conditions: but there is no solution to be found in sneering at the politics of Manchester, and treating the West Riding as a pandemonium. When the appointed guides of the people despair, it is a confession of incapacity. In these smoky towns, too, under the very shadow of the mill, they have but to deal with men, each with a heart in his bosom and a faculty of thought in his soul. If danger there be, it is that, though the new forces and enlarged quantities of society be not in themselves too strong, the old Church provisions for directing and organizing them are quite too weak, and may be shattered and humbled in the attempt. In reading the writings of modern "Churchmen," nothing strikes us so forcibly as the intense antipathy to every thing distinctively national. The Lectures of Father Newman abound in bitter sarcasms on the "free-born, self-dependent, animal mind of the Englishman," who will have no "restrictions put upon *grace*, when he has thrown open trade, removed disabilities, abolished monopolies, taken off agricultural protection, and enlarged the franchise." These Lectures are indeed written by a Roman Catholic; but they were addressed to Anglicans, and by one who has superlative skill in the selection of topics adapted to their tastes. The following passage is a fair specimen of the ecclesiastical feeling towards English life, described under the theological *sobriquet*, "the world."

"Were it to my present purpose to attack the principles and proceedings of the world, of course it would be obvious for me to retort upon the cold, cruel, selfish system, which this supreme worship of comfort, decency, and social order necessarily introduces; to show you how the many are sacrificed to the few, the poor to the wealthy, how an oligarchical monopoly of enjoyment is established far and wide, and the claims of want, and

pain, and sorrow, and affliction, and guilt, and misery are practically forgotten. But I will not have recourse to the commonplaces of controversy while I am on the defensive. All I would say to the world is, Keep your theories to yourself, do not inflict them upon the sons of Adam everywhere; do not measure heaven and earth by views which are in a great degree insular, and never can be philosophical and Catholic. You do your work, perhaps, in a more business-like way, compared with ourselves, but we are immeasurably more tender, and gentle, and angelic. We come to poor human nature as the angels of God, and you as policemen. Look at your poor-houses, lunatic asylums, and prisons; how perfect are their externals, what skill and ingenuity appear in their structure, economy, and administration; they are as decent, and bright, and calm as what our Lord seems to name them,—dead men's sepulchres. Yes! they have all the world can give, all but life; all but a heart. Yes! you can hammer up a coffin; you can plaster a tomb; you are nature's undertakers: you cannot build it a home. You cannot feed it, or heal it; it lies, like Lazarus, at your gate, full of sores. You see it gasping and panting with privations and penalties; and you sing to it, you dance to it, you show it your picture-books, you let off your fireworks, you open your menageries. Shallow philosophers! Is this mode of going on so winning and persuasive, that we should imitate it?"—*Lectures*, p. 209.

This invective against all *secular* forms of compassion towards want and suffering addresses itself to a feeling exceedingly lively, we fear, among the priesthood of the English Church. They certainly are free from the lecturer's reproach; for who ever found them singing and dancing to poor human nature, plying it with picture-books, or even, to any great extent, with the alphabet? Whatever has been done of this profane kind is really not to be laid at their door. They were no partners to Joseph Lancaster's zeal for spelling, apart from regeneration; and had it depended on them, not an unbaptized man, from the Cheviot to the Channel, would, to this hour, have been able to sign his name. They were guiltless of abetting Raikes's project for Sabbath-breaking schools; and, if they

could, would have kept the precincts of every place of worship pure from the sacrilegious presence of slate or copy-book. Dr. Birkbeck did not complain of any rivalry from them in the establishment of Mechanic's Institutes; nor are the cheap concerts, and zoological gardens, which are so painful to the son of St. Philip Neri, peculiarly clerical establishments. There were chaplains to the prisons,—those whited sepulchres,—before the time of Howard and Elizabeth Fry: the places were perhaps quite as sepulchral, but they were certainly less white. In fact, lay the poor Lazarus at the gate of the Romish and of the English priest, and what is the difference? The one will confess him; the other, reading to him the service for the visitation of the sick, will "move him to confess"; and both will give him absolution. Neither of these "comes to poor human nature" exactly "like a policeman"; neither of them, we devoutly hope, is much "like the angels of God": but whatever the one is, the other is surely not dissimilar; and the lecturer's sacerdotal sarcasms against the methods of secular benevolence and social administration express the spirit and temper of them both. The only difference is, that the priestly element is less ascendant in the English than in the Roman system, and that our Church is politically too dependent on the nation not to be distinctly affected by national sentiments. Instead, therefore, of absolutely blocking them out at their origin, after the fashion of an Austrian or Bavarian priesthood, our clergy (notwithstanding honourable exceptions) obstruct their course and hang upon their rear, and follow with antipathy the movements of a generous lay sentiment which it is their place to guide with sympathy. It is undeniable that into every social improvement, every extension of mixed education, every removal of religious exclusion, which has characterized the last half-century, the Church has been reluctantly dragged. They have been found *against* the changes which the prevailing feeling of the country, which Parliament, which statesmen, which

history, must regard as the best features of the age. Were this a truly devout conservatism, the enthusiasm of self-devotion arresting the downward course of a degenerate time, we could joyfully do homage to their fatal zeal in clinging to the untenable. But who can pretend to discover in it any trace of the prophet's quick instinct for good and ill?—who deny that its only steady principle has been the priest's tenacity of threatened power? If there is a spot in the empire which may fairly be regarded as the inmost shrine of the Church, authorized to express its genius and will, that spot is Oxford. Some century and a quarter ago, John Wesley was Fellow of Lincoln College and Greek Lecturer there. With a few companions, recoiling, like himself, from the profligate habits of the place, he took to heart the appeals of Law's "Serious Call," and resolved to live with the invisible realities which with others served but for a stately dream or a mocking jest. In the cold midnight, beneath the truthful sky, he struggled for a faith worthy of so great a sight. He prayed without ceasing: he fasted in secret: he passed the mystery on from his own heart to the soul of others; and led the saintly life with less offence to creed and prejudice, than almost any devotee in history. The son of a High Church rector, he could not be charged with unsacramental doctrine or Nonconformist sympathies: he denied the Christian baptism of Dissenters, and drove them from the communion as unregenerate. He duly proved his spirit of self-sacrifice by preferring a mission to the Indians of Georgia to a parochial provision at home, and the fraternity of the poor Herrnhüter to the aristocratic priesthood of England. The sequel is well known; how he took up the labours, while others boasted of the privileges, of Apostleship; civilized whole counties; lifted brutal populations into communities of orderly citizens and consistent Christians; and in grandeur of missionary achievement rivalled the most splendid successes of Christendom. With what eye did the Church, as the Mother, and the University, as the

Nurse, of so much greatness, look upon his career? Did they avail themselves of his gifts, bless Heaven for the timely mission of such rare graces, and heap on him the work which he was so eager to do, and they so much needed to get done? Did they found an order to bear his name and propagate his activity? He coveted their support; and so clung to their alliance, that seldom has a strong enthusiasm been combined with such moderation. But in their most favourable mood, they did but stare and stand aloof. It was in vain to look to the clergy for their help: he was driven to a lay organization, and even a lay ministry: the Wesleyan Chapel became the rival, instead of the auxiliary, of the Parish Church; and the most loyal of all popular religious bodies was absolutely repulsed from conformity. When the leaders, with a cart for their pulpit and a field for their church, provoked the vices and passions they denounced, and were stoned and carried off to prison, the rector was less likely to be their intercessor than their judge. And in Wesley's college days, where the premonition of his religious movement was distinctly given, he met no wisdom and affection to protect him from the scorn of the learned and the laughter of the rich. The Apostle of popular piety was repudiated and contemned.

Early in 1829, the Duke of Wellington became convinced that the fit moment had arrived for terminating the contest between the British Government and the Catholic Association, by removing the political disabilities affecting nearly one third of the subjects of the empire. Sir Robert Peel had represented in Parliament the University of Oxford, and on adopting the resolution to act in conjunction with the Duke of Wellington, resigned his seat, and asked from his constituents a verdict upon his new opinions. It was a significant election. Had the attachment to a tolerant policy been strong, the conversion to it of the most practical statesmen of the day would have been readily accepted as an assurance that state expediency, instead of hindering, imperatively demanded its application. Had

the spirit of exclusiveness been weak,—a mere waning tradition ready to die out,—there was an unexampled opportunity of discarding it without danger, if not without reproach: for the Universities were expressly excepted from the new sphere of honour open to the Catholics. The result is not forgotten. The confidence of Oxford was transferred from Sir Robert Peel to Sir Robert H. Inglis; and a disinterested testimony borne against all concession of religious liberty.

But perhaps nothing else could be expected from such an institution,—the great guardian of our Reformed Church. Perhaps the traditions of 1687 were too vividly preserved, and the tower of Magdalen was too visible a monument of danger from Roman Catholic aggression, to permit the least negotiation with so insidious a faith. Under the tyranny of James the Second, had not Popish principles been imported into the place, been taught by the Fellows, proclaimed in the chapel, and occupied the Bishop's throne? And must not a body which had carried on a contest with a king in such a cause be jealous of its Protestant repute; and, having withstood the Declaration of Indulgence, protest against the Act of Emancipation? Let the answer be given by events. Four years after the election of 1829, began to issue from Oxford a series of publications, in which the whole Protestant theory of Religion was assailed from its foundation; the Reformation treated as a sacrilegious rebellion; the Continental churches disowned; the Patristic theology declared authoritative; private judgment solemnly renounced; and Christianity rested on Apostolic succession, sacerdotal prerogative, and sacramental grace. It seemed a bold undertaking to spring up in the very fortress of the national Protestantism; the rash prowess, perhaps, of solitary and miscalculating zeal, secure of instant rebuke from the spirit of the place. Time has undeceived us. So congenial did the Academic influences prove, that the leaders in the movement appeal to their success, as too wonderful for natural persuasion, and giving

visible evidence of miracle. Not undergraduates alone worked into the fervours of romance; but fellows, tutors, preachers and professors joined the Catholic revival; prelates were soon found among their ranks; and, were anyone curious to compare the creed of Parker with that of Wilberforce, it might remain doubtful whether episcopacy in Oxford was much more Protestant in 1850 than in 1687. At all events, hundreds of clergymen have learned, in colleges speaking the voice of the Church, principles which throw contempt on our revolt from Rome, and on all that we have won from the sixteenth century to the present hour. Oxford, so resolute against the Pope's Catholics, could gently nurse her own. Sacerdotal claims were dangerous only in rival and in foreign hands. She fosters them against the English nation; but keeps them all within the English Church. Thus have three opportunities been given to the greatest of our ecclesiastical institutions, to declare itself in relation to the deepest national interests, —Methodism, Toleration, Sacerdotalism. It pronounces against any day of Pentecost for the people; against any relaxation of disabling laws on account of religion; and encourages priestly pretension in its own communion.

The operation of this spirit is the more to be deplored because it determines the temper of the higher classes of English society. Politicians, we are aware, are accustomed to calculate on the ascendency over the clergy of lay, and especially of aristocratic influences. And no doubt the system of patronage, and the opinions of wealthy and powerful parishioners cannot be without their effect on the clergyman. But in quiet times, and in the long run, the mental action, we are persuaded, is prevailingly in the opposite direction. The squire is usually a man of less activity of thought than the curate or the vicar; and beyond a certain range of political judgments to which he is pledged by habits and profession, is not likely to resist the steady pressure of sentiment from the most intelligent and venerated authority in his vicinity. The remark applies

still more strongly to the ladies of his family. Hence, whatever tendency exists actively in the clergy, impresses itself on the great body of the country gentlemen and noble houses; and should the tendency be unfortunately in contradiction to the predominant bias of the nation, dangerous social divisions are produced. The aristocratic contempt felt towards Nonconformists and their institutions is mischievously enhanced by this cause. The picture which Mr. Miall draws, in the following sentences, of clerical influence in the rural districts, is not free from exaggeration; and, in referring the evil to state endowment, he appears to us to mistake the nature of the malady; but we presume he expresses the prevalent feeling of the Dissenters, and must be received as an unexceptional witness to their occasional experience.

"This legalized ecclesiasticism, claiming exclusive right to dispense God's Gospel to the people of these realms, and casting contempt on all unauthorized effort, puts itself into jealous and active antagonism to the Christian zeal which sends forth into our neglected towns, and amongst our stolid peasantry, labourers of various denominations, for the purpose of rescuing immortal souls from a cruel and fatal bondage. Every one familiarly acquainted with our rural districts can bear witness to facts in proof of this position. Go into almost any village in the empire, and set yourself down there to win souls to Christ; and your bitterest foe, your most energetic and untiring opponent will prove to be the clergyman,—the state-appointed minister of Jesus Christ. The very first symptoms of spiritual life which show themselves among his parishioners,—social meetings for prayer, anxious inquiries for the way of salvation, eager attention to the proclamations of the Gospel,—will attract his vigilant notice, and provoke his severest censure. The thing is so common, and has been so from time immemorial, as to cease to excite surprise. Would you stir up in men's minds serious concern respecting their highest interests, the parish 'priest' will be sure to cross your path at every step. Gather round you the children of the poor, to instil into their young and susceptible hearts the truths of the Gospel, and instantly their parents are threatened with a forfeiture of all claims upon

parochial charity. Circulate from house to house plain, pungent, religious tracts, and in your second or third visit you will learn that the vicar has forbidden their reception. Assemble a few men and women 'perishing for lack of knowledge,' that you may preach to them the message of reconciliation, and ten to one you will be informed, in the course of a few weeks, that the occupant of the house in which you laboured has been served with a notice to quit. It matters nothing that your efforts are free from all tinge of sectarianism, they are regarded as intrusive, irregular, and mischievous. How many villages are there in this country, in which, through clerical influence, it is impossible to hire a room, within the narrow walls of which to proclaim to rustic ignorance the tidings of eternal life! How many more in which, from the same cause, misrepresentation, intimidation, and oppressive power are brought to bear upon miserable and helpless dependents, and to scare them beyond the reach of the gladsome sound of mercy! How many millions of souls, hemmed in on all sides by this worldly system of religion, cry aloud from the depths of their ruin to earnest Christians for help, whom, nevertheless, State-churchism renders it impossible to reach! It was, doubtless, with this melancholy picture before his eyes, that Mr. Binney so emphatically pronounced his opinion,—fully justified, I think, by the facts of the case,—that the Church of England destroys more souls than she saves."—p. 369.

We are brought back, from whatever aspect of our ecclesiastical affairs we choose to study, to the one evil which impresses all foreign observers of the Anglican Establishment, and which recent events render so conspicuous,—its sacerdotal character. The Church might be excessive in its endowments, aristocratic in its connections, narrow in its creed: but did it pretend to nothing but to be the Nation's Church, these things might easily be mended by the nation's will. It is the claim of a supernatural character, that renders its exclusiveness at once hopeless and intangible. So long as this claim remains uneffaced, no statesman will be able to deal successfully with the ecclesiastical problems presented to him, and must be checkmated in every game he plays with the

Episcopacy. We do not say whether the claim be true or false; but we do say, that the Church which refuses to withdraw it is *ipso facto* disqualified for recognition as *the* establishment in a nation of mixed religions. Prohibited by its principles from becoming comprehensive, it must be content with a position less than national. It is the sacerdotal doctrine which involves the whole subject of the Royal Supremacy in such miserable confusion, and renders the constitutional phraseology of the Tudor times wholly inadequate to the exigencies of the present day.* When Henry the Eighth required from convocation an acknowledgment of his prerogative as supreme head of the Church in these realms, his intention undoubtedly was to provide fully for the consequences of his breach with Rome, and to centre in the Crown *all* the prerogatives which it had hitherto shared with the Papacy. In the appointment of bishops, he had already possessed the right of investing them with their temporalities; he now acquired the right of conferring on them their spiritualities: and nothing remained in the whole process of making or unmaking bishops, to which his prerogative was inadequate. It was not meant by this to reduce the episcopal office to a mere state appointment; else there would have been no occasion, on discarding the Pope, to assume any new power for

* This is the "Oath of Supremacy":—

"I, A. B., do utterly testify and declare, that the Queen's highness is the only supreme governor of this realm, and all other her highness' dominions and countries, as well in all spiritual and ecclesiastical things or causes as temporal; and that no foreign prince, person, prelate, state, or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, pre-eminence, or authority, ecclesiastical or spiritual, within this realm; and therefore I do utterly renounce and forsake all foreign jurisdictions, powers, superiorities, and authorities, and do promise that from henceforth I shall bear faith and true allegiance to the Queen's highness, her heirs and lawful successors, and to my power shall assist and defend all jurisdictions, pre-eminences, privileges and authorities, granted or belonging to the Queen's highness, her heirs and successors, or united and annexed to the imperial crown of this realm."

the King. The purpose was not to lower, or in any way change the nature of Episcopacy, but to exalt the functions of Royalty by absorbing into it the spiritual rights disengaged from Rome. How the lineal Apostleship of the Supreme Pontiff, and the prerogatives inherent in St. Peter's chair, could be imported into the English monarchy, was not very clear. But the difficulty was got over by appeal to the divine right of kings;—a right not questioned in those days, and admitting of easy extension from the sphere of natural to that of Christian polity. In acknowledgement of the royal supremacy in this unrestricted sense, Cranmer and other bishops, on the accession of Edward the Sixth, renewed the tenure of their sees, by taking out commissions for holding them during the pleasure of the Crown. While this notion prevailed, and the sovereign, in addition to the functions of chief magistrate, held a pontifical character, room was left for the maintenance of Episcopacy as a divine institution, annexed to the sacred prerogative of the Crown, as the officers of state belonged to its civil dignity. In this sense, and in this only, is the royal supremacy extensive enough for its avowed end, namely, completely to block out the Pope from this kingdom. It soon occurred, however, to the stricter reformers, that an oath of supremacy, constructed with such a meaning, contained two positions, —a negative one, that the Pope had *not* in England the supremacy he claimed; and an affirmative one, that the sovereign *had*. The former they could cordially take; but the latter involved crown rights of consecration and ordination which the school of Geneva scrupled to admit. It was important to gain their acquiescence; and unimportant to insist strongly on any thing but the *negative* part of the oath. A further distinction was therefore drawn; the spiritual prerogative, as conceived in its plenitude by Cranmer, was divided into two elements,—the supernatural or pontifical, in virtue of which the Crown would cease to be a lay power, and might confer divine offices; and the

simply ecclesiastical, in virtue of which the judicial powers of the Crown were to be liable to no exceptions, and the canon as well as the civil law was to find its final interpreter upon the throne. By insisting only on the latter of these two, and expressly disclaiming "authority and power of ministry of divine service in the Church," Elizabeth relieved the scruples of her Calvinistic subjects, and rendered the oath unobjectionable to all but Catholics."* The consequences of this restriction of the spiritual supremacy are curious. It no longer involves any thing which the Dissenter of the present day could hesitate to own: the jurisdiction of the Queen over all persons and in all causes which by law may be brought before ecclesiastical tribunals, is not a matter which he is at all concerned to deny. Were authority claimed, indeed, over himself in the concerns of his religion, he would not acknowledge it; but no such claim is made: the concerns of his religion do not fall within the legal scope of "spiritual and ecclesiastical things and causes": were they comprised within the terms of the oath at all, it would be under the designation of "things temporal"; for as the Nonconformist minister is a layman, so we apprehend is his church, or his synod, a secular body in the eye of the law. But not even under this title are any affairs of dissenting conscience included: for the Queen's temporal supremacy goes only to the execution of the laws, and cannot encroach upon that which the law leaves free; and this is the case with the Nonconformist's faith and worship. We conceive, therefore, that Cardinal Wiseman mistakes the purport of this crown prerogative when he says:—

"The royal supremacy is no more admitted by the Scotch kirk, by Baptists, Methodists, Quakers, Independents, Presbyterians, Unitarians, and other Dissenters, than by the Catholics. None of these recognize in the Queen any authority to interfere in their religious concerns, to appoint their ministers for

* See Hallam's Constitutional History, Vol. I. p. 152.

them, or to mark the limits of their separate districts, in which authority has to be exercised."—*Appeal*, Sec. I.

Certainly, the sects in question recognize no such authority. But no such authority does the royal supremacy include; for where the law assumes no control, the Queen can have no jurisdiction.

But why, in this view, need the Catholics themselves object to take the oath? The royal supremacy no more includes any power to appoint their bishops than to name a Methodist superintendent; and might apparently be acknowledged, without prejudice to the reserved rights of conscience, by Dr. Wiseman no less than by Dr. Bunting. A Presbyterian minister is tried for heterodoxy by a synod which hears the cause and decides by vote. A Catholic priest is accused of publishing an heretical book, carries his appeal to the Pope, and is required to recant. With neither process does the English law interfere; and if on this account the Presbyterian trial is no infringement on the royal supremacy, how can the Papal decision be so? The oath guards the sovereign as carefully (though less *in extenso*) from domestic as from foreign interferences with the prerogative; and if it lets in the Synod can hardly keep out the Pope. In both cases the interposition of some other person than the Queen for the adjustment of a dispute, or the determination of a doubt, is of the nature of mere private influence, and no more constitutes a trespass on the royal supremacy, than the moral power of a father over sons who have attained their majority, or of arbitrators over disputants resorting to them. The Catholic, therefore, is not hindered from taking the oath of supremacy by the spiritual allegiance which he owes to the Supreme Pontiff; for he can pay that allegiance, and freely move within the pale of his church affairs, without encountering the crown prerogative at all. There is no "divided allegiance" in submitting to a legally permitted influence. The real bar to the Catholic's taking the oath of supremacy lies elsewhere. That oath requires him to

say, not simply that the Pope "has not," but that he "*ought not* to have any jurisdiction" within this realm; and this is what he cannot affirm without giving the lie to his faith, which teaches him that the Pope, of divine right, is entitled to that appellate jurisdiction, which, for three centuries, England has improperly denied to him. In refusing the oath of supremacy, the Catholic must therefore be regarded, not as the jealous guardian of his own spiritual allegiance, but as protester against others' spiritual defection. By the act of 1829, which sanctions his refusal and substitutes another form, the right is reserved to him of maintaining this protest; and of living in the State as a person who must always desire an ecclesiastical restoration of the realm of Rome.

Observe, finally, the operation on the Established Church of Elizabeth's lowered interpretation of her spiritual supremacy. The pontifical prerogative of the sovereign being thrown away, the divine rights of Episcopacy lose their support and go a-begging. Whither, now, are they to look for their legitimation? Formerly they claimed in right of the Holy See. That title being cancelled, they held of the consecrating power of the Crown. This having disappeared, what becomes of them? They ought, as dependents, to have shared the fall of their superior, and vanished from existence; leaving to the bishop's office mere human functions of ecclesiastic administration, for which a civic nomination would serve as adequate credentials. But against this, the liturgies and offices of the Church were, and are, a standing and insuperable obstacle. Who was to say, "Receive the Holy Ghost by the imposition of our hands"? Who was to convey the stewardship of Sacramental Grace? Was the disposal of Regeneration in the patronage of the Lord Privy Seal; and the power of Absolution in the gift of the Wool-sack? So long as these supernatural pretensions formed an integral part of the Church theory, they must be vested somewhere, and pretenders would not be wanting. There were but two re-

sources,—to reaccept the authentication of Rome, or to transfer to the Anglican hierarchy, as a pontifical aristocracy, the prerogatives alienated from the monarchy of St. Peter. In either case, the concession made by the Crown is of no profit to the kingdom: the claim resigned is simply reinvested. The whole Papal authority exists among us still; and in dividing the spoil, the Crown obtains only the Court of Arches, while the Episcopacy come in for the keys of heaven and hell. Thus the pontifical rights, which seemed to have become as disconsolate ghosts in the sixteenth century, are again in the body of the nineteenth. Like the unclean spirits, had they been cast out by the finger of God, with the simplicity of a heavenly command, they would have gone to their own place for ever. But under the clumsy exorcism of human policy, they have but wandered awhile through the dry places of ecclesiastic controversy, seeking rest and finding none: till, seeing the old Anglican abode not only temptingly swept and garnished, but still empty of any diviner spirit, they have returned whence they came out; and, being now many instead of one, threaten to make the last state of that Church worse than the first. The Queen's supremacy and the nation's Protestantism have far more formidable rivals in the sacerdotal pretensions of the Church, than in the titles of Catholic prelates and the boundaries of Papal dioceses.

Politicians, we are aware, have no belief that any mere theory, like that of a priestly polity, can have the least practical effect. They do not deny that the Liturgy is too Romish; but they rely on its being counteracted by the Calvinistic tone of the Articles, and on the tendency to either extreme being virtually lost in the predominant good sense and moderation of the English people. They admit that the Church scheme of religion cannot stand the test of a severe, or even of a lenient logic; that it is not a consistent whole, and bears evident traces of the contradictory energies from whose balance it sprung. But this, they contend, which spoils it for the thinker, recommends it to the

nation. There is something to suit every taste; and he who finds his own sentiment reflected from the Collects does not care to test it by the Commination. Compromise is the secret of all united action and united profession; and the moment you reconcile the formularies with each other, you split the Church itself to fragments. Coherence among men must be brought about by incoherence in their creeds. It is the peculiar glory of the Anglican theology, that it has found a *via media* between the unreformed and the over-reformed Churches; enriches the cold and rigid lines of Puritanic faith with mediæval colouring; places a mixed trust on Scripture and tradition,—on history and the soul,—on the priest and the prophet,—on reason and authority,—on truth and the magistrate. In this way extremes are avoided, controversies kept within limits, and the tempers of men retained around a centre of mildness and sobriety. The spirit of the Church impersonates itself to the imagination of the statesman in the form of a bland Archbishop, entirely composed of unrealized inclinations; a little evangelical; something of a Church reformer; not too easy with his clergy; skilled in charitable words, but patient of exclusive things; content to leave doctrine as he finds it; making no attempt to steer the Church in storm, lest he should wreck it, but punctually sitting at the helm and reading prayers for it.

This favourite style of defence is like the thing defended,—a *via media* between truth and falsehood; and suits the national taste for a ready-made opinion, without the trouble of thought or a care for consistency. It is certainly true, that, in order to effect combined action, individual views must give way, and a course be assented to which probably no one person sharing in it regards as the best. But there is a manifest distinction to be drawn between partnership in external *action* and partnership in the profession of *conviction*. You are member of a committee for building public baths: one man wants them at the east end of the town, another at the west; the secretary wants

a brick structure, the treasurer insists on stone; the chairman is anxious for a Roman design, but you have brought a plan from Flanders. In these various suggestions there is no absolute right or absolute wrong. No one imagines that his own proposal has more to recommend it than a certain preponderance of advantage; and he feels that his duty is satisfied when he has fairly pointed out the grounds of his preference. Nothing that could be gained by substituting his scheme for another would be worth the risk of forfeiting co-operation. The primary end for which the combination was formed is gained by compromise, and would be lost by unyieldingness. But suppose you are on the council of a political league, engaged in preparing a declaration of principles. One member moves a preamble announcing the doctrine of natural equality; another, equally intent on the abolition of serfdom, believes from Scripture in the annointing of kings. One is convinced that colonies are a mere excuse for cost and jobbing, and should be turned adrift; another, no less zealous for free trade, relies on colonial empire as a main element of political security and greatness. One is for an immediate appeal to arms; another is president of the Peace Society, and insists on disclaiming the right to take away human life. What would be the reception of the mediating councillor who should rise and say:—"Gentlemen, it is plain there must be some mutual concessions. There are many points on which we differ; whether there are any on which we agree all round is the less necessary to determine, because on the one practical conclusion we all concur,—We must have a declaration, and must uphold our league. The document—since it must be signed by us all—cannot be all of one complexion; no gentleman at this table can expect to deal with it as a private paper embodying just his own system of ideas. But among reasonable men, looking mainly to the practical end of securing adherents to our body, there can be no desire to press severely on particular views, and perhaps questionable niceties. The Address must

have many paragraphs, and will enable us to assign to each gentleman a fair proportion. If the preamble is too strong on human equality, it can be corrected by referring in the body of the paper to the divine rights of the Crown; and if our Quaker friends put too much emphasis on their doctrine of passive resistance, we can soften it by a postcript demanding that the militia be called out. In this way, nobody will be able to read through the Declaration without finding something to approve; all tastes will be suited; each one of ourselves, having for the sake of his principles put his name to something that qualifies them, will be deterred, in case of controversy, from pushing his doctrine to any hurtful, and (let me add) vulgar extreme. Amid the general support of sensible people, we can easily make all dissentients appear in the light of egotists or fanatics."

If such proposals as these would be intolerable in relation to political profession, they are certainly not less so in reference to religious. In affairs of external action, there is a more or less expedient and effective, in every gradation. In declarations of faith, there can be no such gradation, nor any of the liberty of honest choice which it allows: every proposition presents itself to the mind as either simply true or simply untrue; and the assent to it is either absolutely veracious or absolutely unveracious. The rule of integrity is not satisfied when a man has provided for the due assertion of a truth; it prohibits his ever being consciously a party to the assertion of a falsehood; nor can he compound for a moderate allowance of fraudulent statements by an adequate mixture of positions heartily believed. In erecting a public bath-house, the supporter of brick and the advocate for stone may come to a fair agreement, by deciding on a brick building with stone facings. But in raising the structure of a Faith, the Catholic and the Calvinist cannot honestly settle their differences by embodying sacerdotal and sacramental doctrines in the Liturgy and Rubric, and throwing the Genevan ingredients into the Articles; and whatever peace

is secured on such terms is morally disgraceful to both parties, and can be desired only by those who see no truth in either. In the practical affairs of men, compromise may be brought about by *inclusion* of something that is in favour with each, but in faith and worship, only by *exclusion* of whatever is offensive to any. This, we are convinced, was the principle on which, originally, the services and formularies of the Church were framed. There was no "compromise," in the degrading sense in which that word is now continually employed,—no intentional admixture of truth and falsehood out of complaisance; but simply an abstinence from statements of doctrine in which concurrence seemed impossible. But the incongruous mixture then unconsciously produced is no longer unconsciously mantained. Amid the struggling elements of the Reformation period, when the intellect and reverence, usage and power, were settling their respective claims, the just logical boundary between the new and the old systems was long undetermined: the clearest vision could not discern it: and it would have been surprising, had not attachment to the past preserved some elements which would not bear the scrutiny of the future. The historical development of three centuries has since exhibited the character and fixed the theory of the two religions: we know what belongs to each; and the controversies of the last fifteen years have clearly elicited this result, *that where there is pontifical doctrine, there cannot be Protestantism; and that where there is a* jus divinum *there can be no harmony with a free State.* This is emphatically the discovery, legible in the awful handwriting of Providence upon the surface of this age; dazzling enough to startle even the heedless multitude, and a timely warning to those who would restore the Church before her days are numbered. It is now too late to sound the praises of compromise: when once it has become detected inconsistency, its charm and power are gone; it fascinates only the sceptic contemner of mankind; it repels the truthful and the noble. The time is come when the dis-

cordant elements must part: either within the Prayer-Book, to the revival of the Church; or, in the persons of her disciples, to her dissolution. So far is the preservation of the *via media* from being an essential to permanence, that it is the most certain mark of a transitional and temporary Church. No half-way scheme of doctrine, throughout the ages of Christendom, has been able to sustain itself in any strength; Semi-Arianism, Semi-Pelagianism, moderate Calvinism, are transient phenomena of human thought,—like some seedless annual, whose root dies in the ground,—not like the natural grass, that grows for ever. What scheme of belief, on the other hand, is so coherent and compact, what ecclesiastic administration so uniform and unbending, as the Roman Catholic, whose duration and extent are above rivalry? It is vain by any artificial adjustments, any eclectic composition, to coerce incongruous sentiments into partnership. In each great scheme of faith there is a vital principle of its own, which rules its development and prescribes the conditions of its vigorous growth. To force two into the same organism,—like thrusting a grape-seed into an acorn before you sow it,—is either to destroy both, or to waste the strength of one in killing the other, and then throwing it off when dead. Does not, indeed, the history of the English Church itself show the inefficacy of a mixed system as an instrument of union? Is it true that she has retained the attachment of both the Catholic and the Protestant class of minds in her communion? On the contrary, she has secured the love of neither. No Church born of the Reformation has driven out half the number of Dissenters: and as to Romanists she will have created more in this generation than the Jesuit missionaries could steal in a century from any other communion. Never was incompetency proved on a scale so gigantic; never was pretence more preposterous than that of the Church to unite believers of every shade,—with a third of the religious English Dissenters, and a third of the empire Catholics! Have we not a right to

complain, as British citizens, that boasting to be national, she cannot keep us together? Nay, that she is incapable of even defending us against the very religion she was erected to exclude?—and what is worse, actually reproduces it and supplies it with a centre of fresh European life? Moreover, we have the melancholy conviction, that nothing whatever will be done towards cutting out the root of the evil. The clergy just now are very angry with the Catholics; which is taken by simple people as proof that they are truly Protestant. There are some, indeed, who look a little further and suggest a revision of the Prayer-Book. But what are the alterations contemplated? A shortening of the Morning Service,—a better selection of the lessons,—an omission (unless as a record) of the Athanasian Creed,—with such a reform in the rubrics as may exclude Tractarian histrionics: all good proposals in themselves, but leaving the active source of evil entirely untouched. The real mischief of such a phenomenon as the temple of St. Barnabas is not in what meets the eye, not in vestments, lights, and postures, in the piscina and the almoric, in the sign of the cross or swell of the organ; these things are in themselves matters of perfect indifference, and were they mere externals, might be as harmlessly allowed as the candles retained by the Lutherans not only in their churches, but even in the baptismal service at private houses. But for the *meaning* they embody, the new excesses in these things would be mere spiritual fopperies, which a bishop might usefully castigate with peremptory contempt: they are, however, much more than this; they are more even than the mere court etiquette attached by custom and accident to the Papal system, disagreeably reminding us of discarded mummeries: they are the symbols of one special thought, the clear, deliberate, precise language handed down for its picturesque expression; the ceremonial that surrounds a certain doctrine, which, if true, is the living principle, if false, is the consuming disease, of pure Christianity. What is that doc-

trine? That the clergyman is a priest, and the communion-table an altar, and that, by letters patent from God, it is only through the hands of one and the rites of the other that Divine grace can enter any soul of man, and sin depart. This it is which alone gives significance to the new practices: and this, unfortunately, has full warrant from the Prayer-Book, and, while it stands there, bids defiance to the resources of Episcopal discipline. Till it is cancelled, the Tractarian acts with reason in introducing his favourite emblems; the bishop, in prohibiting them, acts with no reason at all: the one has an idea to convey, the other has none to exclude: in the hands of the one the contest is for a principle, in that of the other it is an empty logomachy. So long as that element remains, there could be no more foolish task than the reform of the rubrics and the simplification of the ritual. You might dress your clergymen like Quakers, furnish your chancel in the style of Cromwell, make your communion-table like a joiner's bench, and set it to the north; you would find that, as silk and surplice do not make a priest, neither can coercive drab and sackcloth unmake him; that it is not the altar decorations, but the altar doctrine, in which the grievance has its life. Take the sacerdotalism away: say with Luther, that every Christian, with only the inward ordination of the Spirit, is on a par with priest or bishop, and that the minister is but the delegated teacher, qualified "proprio motu et generali jure";* and all the millinery and upholstery, and mystifications of the sanctuary, will spontaneously wither, never to appear again. Some of our prelates, many of the clergy, and vast numbers of the laity, are well

* See his Essay to the Bohemian brethren, as cited by Dr. Moehler in his "Symbolism," Robertson's translation, Vol. II. p. 92. Luther here, as was too often the case, deforms a noble truth with coarse invective. "Catholic ordination is exhibited as a mere daubing, shaving, and jugglery, whereby naught but lying and idle fools, true priests of Satan, were made. One could likewise shave the hair off any sow, and put a dress on any block."

aware of this: they know, too, that the priestly doctrine, with much that hangs upon it, has no real life in the heart of the English people, and is little better than a monstrous unveracity; yet they will leave it as it is, will screen it as a fundamental of the Church, will gladly divert attention from it by a vigorous attack on the mere external symptoms, which engage the eye and the passions of the multitude. Englishmen have ceased to look for transparent simplicity and directness in their clergy, except in matters which lie remote from the dogmas of their profession, and, in persons like the Anglicans, seized on by some new, perhaps dangerous idea. In the mass of the order, and especially in the prelates, the class feeling is well known to be so strong as to overpower the natural virtues, and enfeeble the Christian graces; to give, unconsciously to the possessor, but conspicuously to the observer, not only the double tongue, but the double mind to work it, to train the outspoken in the arts of reserve, to bind the living and truth-loving intellect to the dead bodies of the very errors which, in days of nobler prowess, itself has slain, and even oblige it to provoke them into vivacity again, and show them off as if they were alive. No amount or solemnity of profession can afford the least index to a clergyman's real state of mind in a Church where Catholics, Calvinists, Latitudinarians, all protest, by hundreds, their entire and detailed assent to the same elaborate system of theology: the result is, that the preachers of truth in their own place and office are the very last persons in the nation to be believed; that the pulpit is as little trusted for sincerity as that appointed resort of hired advocacy, the bar; that the letters of the bishops in crises like the present are not read as reliable expressions of the writers' minds, but watched as diplomatic manifestoes, and studied as the artful movements of a game. Hence there is no hope that any bishop will do more for the Church than die in it. To seize the moment for effective revival, the moment of detected incompetency, of inevitable change, of reanimated

Protestantism, of lay interest and enthusiasm, of pacified nonconformity, and by trenchant reforms call back the alienated portion of the nation, is an enterprise beyond the aims, and, mainly on that account, beyond the power, of those to whom England is ecclesiastically intrusted. And so not even the glaring offence of the hour will be removed; but, after stripping off a few of the blossoms and leaves of Romanism, the sacerdotal root will be left in the ground,—to put forth anew, whenever brought once more under the light of a genius intense enough to nurture it and, under the husbandry of Oxford Apostles, give the retributive increase.

But, we shall be asked, will you not allow people to believe in priests and their divine prerogatives? Would you pass a law to hinder it, or compel the High-Churchmen to erase the doctrine from their system? Far from it: let every man be entirely free to profess and worship according to his conscience. We only say, that this doctrine operates as a disqualification for the exclusive alliance with the State of any Church that holds it; and can never be politically harmless, except where either all sects or no sects are endowed by the commonwealth. The reason is plain. When a body of men tell us, that they are sole trustees under God of a certain set of dogmas and channels of grace, they are bound to guard the sacred deposit with incorruptible care, and to hand it down from age to age without the shadow of a change. Their primary obligation is the preservation of an immutable identity of teaching and administration. On the other hand, the primary necessity of a free people is an incessant change of thought and character; and the primary duty of their government is to readapt their institutions to the successive states of the national mind. To suppose that this law of change in human society will make an exception in favour of religion, is a weak defiance of all experience. However fixed the objective sources of faith may be, they cannot fall on changing minds with unchanged results. New arts, new

literature, new wealth,—an altered distribution of social classes,—a quickened circulation of ideas,—a copious importation of foreign thought, — inevitably produce a different people, before whom you cannot present the problems of religion with only the old results. The State, we conceive, must look upon this as *a fact;* and, ere committing itself to exclusive alliance with any body of disciples, must stipulate, as an indispensable condition, that they have a *flexible* faith; not, of course, that individuals are to be called upon to hold loosely by their own convictions, but that there is to be no bar to silent and spontaneous modification from age to age. This is precisely the condition which a sacerdotal communion is bound to repudiate: if it remain not *inflexible*, it is a traitor to its stewardship: and so incompatible are the duties of the two, that the highest faithfulness of a templar church is supreme unfaithfulness in an Establishment. The coexistence of the two functions—political and pontifical—is simply impossible; either the nation must give up its will, or the church its trust. This is better understood at present by the priest than the statesman; and is shown with admirable irony in the following sentences:—

"As physical life assimilates to itself, or casts off, whatever it encounters, allowing no interference with the supremacy of its own principle, so is it with social and civil. When a body politic grows, takes definite shape, and matures, it slights, though it may endure, the vestiges and tokens of its rude beginnings. It may cherish them as curiosities, but it abjures them as precedents. They may hang about it as the shrivelled blossom around the formed fruit; but they are dead, and will be sure to disappear as soon as they are felt to be troublesome. Common sense tells us they do not apply to things as they are; and if individuals attempt to insist on them, they will but bring on themselves the just imputation of vexatiousness and extravagance. So it is with the Anglican formularies; they are but the expression of the national sentiment, and therefore are necessarily modified by it. Did the nation grow into Catholicity, they might easily be made to assume a Catholic de-

meanour; but as it has matured in its Protestantism, they must take, day by day, a more Evangelical and liberal aspect. Of course I am not saying this by way of justifying individuals in professing and using doctrinal and devotional forms from which they dissent; nor am I denying that words have, or at least ought to have, a definite meaning which must not be explained away: I am merely stating what takes place in matter of fact, allowably in some cases, wrongly in others, according to the strength on the one hand of the wording of the formulary, and of the diverging opinion on the other. I say, that a nation's laws are a nation's property, and have their life in the nation's sentiment: and where that living intelligence does not shine through them, they become worthless and are put aside, whether formally or on an understanding. Now Protestantism is, as it has been for centuries, the nation's religion: and since the semi-patristical church which was set up for the nation at the Reformation is the organ of that religion, it must live for the nation; it must hide its Catholic aspirations in folios, or in college cloisters; it must call itself Protestant when it gets into the pulpit; it must abjure antiquity; for woe to it, if it attempt to thrust the wording of its own documents in its master's path, if it rely on a passage in its Visitation for the Sick, or an article of the Creed, or on the tone of its Collects, or on a catena of its divines, when the age has determined on a theology more in keeping with the progress of knowledge! The antiquarian, the reader of history, the theologian, the philosopher, the Biblical student, may make his protest; he may quote St. Austin, or appeal to the canons, or argue from the nature of the case; but *la Reine le veut;* the English people is sufficient for itself; it wills to be Protestant and progressive; and fathers, councils, and schoolmen, Scriptures, saints, angels, and what is above them, must give way. What are they to it? It thinks, acts, and is contented, according to its own practicable, intelligible, shallow religion; and of that religion its bishops, its divines, will they or will they not, must be exponents."—*Newman's Lectures*, p. 18.

We simply borrow the lecturer's argument, and turn it round. He says to the Anglican ecclesiastics, "As an established clergy, you cannot be faithful to your priestly vows": we rather say, "As faithful to your priestly vows,

you cannot be an established clergy." He says, "The nation will constrain you not to serve your conscience": we more respectfully contend, "Your conscience will constrain you not to serve the nation." The divergence of the two obligations is forcibly brought home to us by the demand, just now so frequently urged, for the revival of convocation, or the organization of some new chamber, for the settlement of ecclesiastical affairs. The question immediately arises, In what capacity is the body to meet?—as priesthood, or as establishment?—as divine corporation, or as human?—as answerable to God alone, or under responsibility to the nation? On the answer to these questions would depend the whole composition of the assembly. Who are to be represented? If only the associations of persons bound together by belief in the Articles and baptism into the same communion, then must the representatives be all Churchmen, if not all priests; they must qualify at the parish altar, and produce credentials from the parish register. But if the national *Establishment* is the thing to be represented and discussed, then must the representatives be drawn indiscriminately from the whole body of *Establishers*, that is, from the nation at large; and the Assembly would be but a duplicate of Parliament. In the former case, the definitions of doctrine and rules of discipline adopted would be simply declaratory of the sentiments of a particular sect: they could have no binding force in reference to the ecclesiastical constitution of the country: they could not be imported as new conditions into the compact with the State. The utmost that could be allowed would be, that they should come before Parliament as *proposals*,—if approved, to become law; if disapproved, to terminate the partnership between the nation and the Church, and to forfeit the temporal endowments of the spiritual corporation. In the latter case, the decrees adopted would determine the doctrine and discipline on which the nation resolved to insist in any ecclesiastical body henceforth admitted or retained for endowment.

They would obtain, after royal assent, the validity of law; and it would then remain for the body hitherto established to decide whether it will accept these conditions, or transfer the national trust to others who are prepared to do so. As a body under priesthood, the Church is a corporation with a charter from on high; and when its affairs are in confusion, they must be set in order by prayer and discussion with closed doors on the part of the corporators themselves. As an Establishment, the Church is a corporation with a charter from the State, and when its working needs revision, it must be brought before the legislature, for reform, not only in the administration, but, if requisite, in the constitution of its charter. This distinction was of little moment during the first century after the separation from Rome; because throughout that period the *persons* composing the State and those composing the Church were the same: the divine charter, however variously interpreted, was universally recognized as creating an incorporation which was to be coextensive (at the least) with the nation: the idea prevailed of one only Christian communion; and even those who could not join in its actual conditions hoped to obtain changes which would bring them in. All ecclesiastical differences lay, therefore, within the Church, among parties struggling to grasp and wield in their own sense its undisputed and undivided authority. In the disputes which arose between the temporal and the spiritual powers, —in the variance, for instance, between Convocation and Parliament as to the nature of the royal supremacy,—the collision was not between two classes or bodies of men, but between two functions of the same body; between the clerical and the lay element of a single communion. But since the Restoration, these conditions of the problem have been passing away; and it is impossible any longer to consider the State and the Church as merely two aspects of one community. The Act of Uniformity was the commencement of that fatal policy which seeks unity by exclusion, instead of by comprehension. By driving the

spiritual exiles to despair of their return, it set them on providing separately for themselves. Compelled to regard their ejected condition as no longer provisional, they gradually founded their own institutions, educated their own clergy, and in baptism, ordination, creed, and worship formed themselves into independent societies. From that moment was realized a condition entirely new; namely, the coexistence of many communions on the same soil. Still, the time had not fully come when the State and the Church should be composed of different persons; for the Nonconformists, in turning their backs upon the Church, had, for a time, to forfeit their position in the State; and, for relief of conscience, paid the price of their civil rights. At first treated as enemies, then endured as μέτοικοι, they slowly approached a recognized isopolity. Now, however, they fully belong to the State, without belonging to the Church: the personal range of the two bodies is no longer coextensive; and the Church, in its relation with the State, has to deal, not with the laic function of her own life, but with an external power, partially in the hands of those who do not own her. The State, in other words, has outgrown the Church; and in readjusting their relations, the legislature cannot narrow its view to the old ecclesiastic circle, and work within the conditions there laid down; it is bound to provide for the nation in its enlarged proportions; and, as in the case of a small borough expanded to a great town, to throw down the municipal boundaries, and modify the corporate rights, in a way to render them commensurate with modern wants. In the performance of this undeniable duty, Parliament, amid many embarrassing problems, would have the advantage of one principle perfectly clear; namely, that, if the Episcopal Church is to continue in her established position, her sacerdotal doctrine must be withdrawn, and her pretended charter of sacramental trust be surrendered; because *this* the whole nation beyond her communion, and probably the vast majority within it, entirely disown. Whatever differences there may be among

the sects, on this the very fact of their nonconformity proves their unanimity. Were this removed, the work of producing a truly National Religious Establishment would indeed be only begun. But while it stands, not even can a beginning be made; a hopeless bar remains between the growing margin of the nation, and the contracting area of the Church,—a bar, moreover, scarcely less hateful to the laity within, than to the unbaptized multitude without. In the present temper of the country, there is a happy consent between the Dissenters, and all but the retrograde portion of the Church, most favourable to a reform of the Prayer-Book in this sense. The external forces that lie beyond the Anglican pale would raise no storm to interrupt such a work; they would either sleep around it in indifference, or watch it with supporting sympathy. All the turmoil would spring up to the interior. Certain it is, that, under such a charge, Dr. Pusey could not accomplish his vow to die in the Church of England. The moment her "priesthood" is converted into an unpretending "ministry," a Tractarian secession is inevitable. But however formidable such an occurrence might be, whether it took the shape of a new schism or of a Papal relapse, its evasion or postponement must incur a far greater danger,—the perpetuated reproduction of Romanism by the agency of the Church herself. On this point we have the judgment of a very competent observer, who watches the course of events from the Papal side. The Rev. W. Maskell, having joined the Roman Catholic Church, records the following opinion in a letter to the *Morning Chronicle*:—

"If ever the day should come that both the Prayer-Book and the Articles should speak, whether upon this side or upon that, no matter which, one uniform, consistent language, controversy between members of the English Church and Catholics must take a very different line. For myself, I do not hesitate to declare, that, in my judgment *the strongest of all our hopes rests on the continuance, unchanged, of the present English formularies;* and that no immediate accession to us of numbers,

however large, would compensate in the end for the slower but more sure gain, from an unceasing flow into the One Church of men inquiring honestly for truth."

Leave to Rome undisputed occupation of the sacerdotal field, and the domain will soon cease to be enlarged. The preparation thus made for nationalizing the Church must no doubt be followed up. The *first* effect is to throw out a large body from her communion: and unless this be compensated by reinforcements from without, her position in the country will be less tenable than ever. But the grand obstacle in the way of such reinforcements is removed, when the clergy no longer pretend to hold the dogmas which they teach by any higher tenure than that of private judgment and conscience in interpreting the sources of divine knowledge. Their responsibility retires within the modest dimensions of their own personal sphere; and asks only that their conscience and their teaching shall have free scope of activity. It ceases to be aggressive; and being conscious of no title which others do not equally possess, they exchange the insolent *ignoring* of their neighbours for respectful, however firm, dissent. Among men thus minded, of what religion must the National Church be the organ? Assuredly of the *national* religion. It is vain to pretend a duty on her part to sanction nothing but the absolute truth. She has no resources for discriminating the absolute truth. With the repudiation of pontifical claims, she loses the false semblance of an objective oracle for the determination of doubts; and can do no more in this matter than produce in her teachers the subjective conditions favourable for the discernment of truth,—the sound learning, the Christian temper, the unanxious thought. If these claims are to be rejected, not in vindication of indispensable freedom, but as means of tighter bondage,—if, when they are gone, we are left with a creed simply narrower by their expulsion,—better let them remain. But we are persuaded that both laity and clergy are ashamed of the

ridiculous affectation of a dogmatic unity to which every Sunday publishes a thousand contradictions. They well know that, in spite of this pretence, the English Church harbours every great heresy that ever provoked the peremptoriness of Rome, and among her writers of renown can produce the modern counterparts of Arius and Eutyches, of Pelagius and Sabellius; nay, the mere politician appeals to these notorious differences as redounding to the praise of the Church, and giving evidence of the wide scope of liberty practically enjoyed by her members. We accept the fact, but must refuse the praise. For the question occurs, whether the Church *gives* this latitude, or whether her members *take* it. We cannot consent to credit her with a result, which all her resources are always strained to prevent before it takes place, and to disown afterwards; but which she is at once too weak to suppress and too uncandid to acknowledge. Those who belong to her communion enjoy the latitude they have, not because they belong to the Church, but because they live in England; the free secular spirit of which is too much for the ecclesiastical influence in the opposite direction. Heretical clergymen and bishops are *forced* upon the Church by statesmen who look only at their personal qualities, or by patrons who appoint from considerations of family, not of creed. For the praise of liberality the Church must wait till she has spontaneously relaxed some one of the dogmatic restrictions by which she fences her rigid orthodoxy round. So far as, without doing this, she admits heterodox theologians, it is by a shameful unveracity. *That* is a price too dear to pay for any dogmatic comprehensiveness: nor can the Church relish such admiration as was once lavished by an *esprit fort* on some of the sceptic priests of the first French revolution. "Our clergy, to be sure, are all perjured; but then, how charmingly liberal!" If we are called on to choose between an intellectual and a moral good, we are constrained, not to applaud the freedom, but to condemn the falsehood;—the more so, as all the intellectual

freedom is undeniably furnished by the spirit of the nation, and all the moral falsehood by the system of the Church. Latitude on these terms has none of the benefit of an allowed liberty. It is a mere forfeiture of unity without the gain of comprehensiveness; for when thought larger than the creed gets in, it is only on condition that it be not scrupulous. Our Church has thus neither enjoyed the advantages of freedom, nor secured the rewards of oppression. She has, however, effectually destroyed the pretended plea, that in her teaching we have a witness to some system of coherent and unalterable truth. Absolute truth then being wrapped, if amongst us at all, in impenetrable disguise, *cannot* be an object of selection: and we can find no claimant for establishment, if it be not the *national* religion: and what that may be is happily a thing easily determinable by vote. In revising the formularies, nothing should be retained which conclusively offends the convictions of any considerable class of worshippers: its retention would be a positive grievance to those whom it would repel: its omission would compromise no religious teacher, provided he were free to supply it in his personal preaching, and to seek a congregation in sympathy with his belief. Such a relaxation of the dogmatic bond would probably not add a single new mode of sentiment to those already existing in the Church. It would be simply a change from an insincere to a sincere allowance of inevitable and actual varieties;—a change which, we are convinced, would be acceptable, not only to the essentially veracious mind of the secular Englishman, but to that pure and faithful religion which, in every communion, is impatient of pretence, and fears no reality. The State, at all events, cannot, in its dealing with ecclesiastical institutions, proceed upon any abstruse theological theory, or limit its basis to the decisions of Nice, of Chalcedon, or of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. It can only accept the *facts* before it, and recognize the religion which has living possession of the mind of the nation, and declares itself unmistakably in their labours and sacrifices

on its behalf. There are but two ways in which this can be done: either the strongest of the actual sects may be taken as expressive of the general will, to the exclusion of all the rest; or they may be all assumed as partial declarations of national faith, to which, as a whole, no one of them is competent to give complete expression. The first method cannot be persisted in without exposing the most divine element of civilization to a series of violent revolutions, and enthroning, in naked *might*, the very influence which is to teach the world the inviolable sanctity of *right*. The most powerful spiritual body in the country may yet comprise but a minority of the inhabitants. Its favoured position will be felt as an injustice, and will naturally provoke a crusade, which, on the first confederation of the hostile forces, will succeed in the work of deliberate destruction, and then miserably scramble towards a fortuitous reconstruction. The second method is undeniably the true exponent of the present facts of society, and can alone restore religion to its tranquil and dignified position above the secular rivalries of the world. We believe that the great mass of the English laity would rejoice in such a change in the formularies of the Church as would allow the gradual return to conformity of classes now excluded by scruples which no honest conscience can despise. Is it objected that but a slender creed would remain if it omitted every thing which was inadmissible by Wesleyan and Baptist, Independent and Arian? We reply, in the first place, that with the slenderness or fulness of the creed, the State, in determining the conditions of established support, has nothing to do. If there be enough in it to train good men and citizens, to nurture the sentiments of duty, and, by spontaneous reverence, bring about, and in a better way, all the highest ends of law, there is sufficient to entitle it to recognition. It expresses the weighty fact, that the noblest aims of civil society are embodied in the private faith of its members, and anticipated by their aspirations. We reply, in the second place, that whoever felt the creed

to be defective should be at perfect liberty to fill it in from his own supplementary convictions. Beyond the public liturgies, which should be much shortened, range might be left in every service for the free ministrations of the clergyman. It would be no doubt necessary, in order to secure harmony, under this free system, between the pastor and his people, to give the congregations a voice in the appointment of their ministers. But against this no objection can be made, except on behalf of the patron's interest,—an interest which, through long abuse and sordid sale, has become so odious to the religious feeling of the country, as to be plainly marked for destruction, unless speedily redeemed by compromise with the principle of congregational election. If the State, by a regulated education, such as it requires in preparation for the other professions, provides the *class* of religious teachers, while the natural affinities of churches have play in allocating *individuals*, security is taken that religion shall be purified by passing through an enriched and practised intellect; and yet an appeal is left to that nameless spiritual instinct by which alone the presence of a living heart can be detected. Under such an arrangement, the Church would soon cease to be disgraced by all the shameful abuses of a close corporation. It would no longer be true, that, out of twelve thousand benefices, eight thousand are transmitted by purchase and sale, and upwards of three thousand in the possession of non-resident incumbents. It would no longer be endured, when once the laity are admitted into the concerns of the clergy, that laborious pastors should starve on £35 a year, and be indebted for £30 of it to Ecclesiastical Commissioners,* some of whom, for sixteen years, have enjoyed

* See "Return to the House of Commons of the Number of Small Livings augmented by Grants at the Disposal of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners," June 4, 1850. The living referred to is the Perpetual Curacy of Staindrop, Durham, page 31 of the Return. How many livings of £5 a year are unaugmented by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners is not recorded.

from the Church an annual revenue of £10,000, and appropriated west-end fines to an untold amount, modestly estimated at half a million. We fear, indeed, that the admission of more popular control into ecclesiastical affairs affords the only hope of remedy for mismanagement and misuse, more flagrant than can now be found in any department of the State. The diocesan and capitular conscience is too easy; the Parliamentary check is too slow, and too much broken by official obstructions; and nothing but a local and provincial element of lay administration, the recognition of a municipal principle in Church affairs, will suffice to break up the sacred oligarchy, and let in the honest daylight on the mystification of their affairs. The rudiments of such a scheme must be sought in the enlarged powers of each congregation for self-government, and the concession to it of a voice in the election of its pastor.

We confess, however, to a doubt, whether a plan of comprehension such as we have imagined is not now too late. The Church, long abandoned to the slumber of a lazy conservatism, is, indeed, awake with a better spirit, and abounds with devoted ministers and high-minded laymen. But in an age so rapid and impatient as ours, repentance may easily miss the tide; and we fear that, after every effort and concession has been spent, England will remain with many churches instead of one. The free development of separate denominations has proceeded very far. It has created a number of powerful organizations, each of which, in its continued operation, has worked for itself a distinct social channel, and appropriated a scarce disputed domain. It has covered the populous portion of the land with chapels and schoolhouses, and so accumulated around the sectarian centres of administration a vast cluster of properties, all in active use. It has called into existence many societies, occupying different spheres, for the advancement of popular education, and several colleges for the cultivation of the higher learning, and the special training of a Christian ministry. After

English society has so long *set* into these forms, it may well be doubted whether their continuance has much dependence on the phraseology of the Liturgy or the breadth of the Articles. When, too, it is remembered, that, if the variances in dogmatic theology were all happily smoothed away, questions of ecclesiastical discipline would arise, and that to some Nonconformists Episcopacy is offensive, while others insist on the independent isolation of each knot of worshippers, it will scarcely appear feasible to remodel any one communion so as to embrace them all. Is there, then, no hope of that return to greater unity, after which, amid all the din of seeming strife, the spirit of the nation evidently pines? We do not despair. Nonconformity is now aware of its inadequacy to the complicated wants of the nation; feels the heavy burden of voluntary taxation; and begins to reckon the waste of a number of rival efforts of the same kind upon the same spot. Moreover, the affinities which originally distributed the religious population into its several masses are rapidly changing: repulsions are acting around the centre of every sect, and attractions making themselves felt across the borders. Only the habits of a declining principle of vitality hold the present forms together: the incipient life of the future is loosening them for unexpected recombination. Looking at the whole matter from a point beyond the inclosure of sects, we see in both the Church and the Dissenters aptitudes for special work which cannot be interchanged between them; and we see vast national endowments which ought to be made subservient to the impartial spiritual culture of the whole people. The State is the trustee of those endowments; and, as judge of the rules by which they should be dispensed, may become the point of unity in which the various labourers and recipients may find their separation lost. It is not unnatural to look at the course of public education as affording some augury in relation to the direction of ecclesiastical affairs. The competing societies of the Church and the Dissenters (the National and the British and Foreign) with the Wes-

leyan and the Catholic school associations, have so far relaxed their severe voluntaryism as to stand in common relation to the committee entrusted with the distribution of the Parliamentary grant for education. Separate in their actions, free in their several movements, they meet in the presence of the State. The inherent feebleness of voluntary institutions, and the difficulty felt by an aristocratic corporation like the Church in grasping the whole population of this land, may surely lead to a similar ecclesiastical partnership, through the mediation of the civil government, commanding for the purpose, not a mere Parliamentary grant, but the vast remains of a long-wasted and abused Church property. Thus to gather up all the religious agencies of the country, under the headship of the State, without encroachment on religious freedom, would doubtless be a most arduous and delicate task; yet, in the hands of a great statesman, by no means impossible. We can imagine a series of measures by which the end might be gradually approached, without apparent offence to the most sensitive conscience. Were the Act of Uniformity repealed, the use of the services of the Prayer-Book, in their complete and unaltered form, would no longer be obligatory on the clergy; and a power of adapting the modes of worship to the convictions of the worshippers would be left. Episcopal ordination, however, would still remain indispensable; so that the external boundaries of the Establishment would not thus be enlarged, though its interior latitude would be increased. In order to secure this further advantage, liberty might be given to parishes, after some regulated compromise with the patrons,—to elect their own ministers;—no one being eligible except a person with a University degree and ordination or recognition according to the usages of some one denomination known to the law. This would enable a parish to become Wesleyan or Presbyterian, if such change accorded with the predominant feeling of the place. To meet the financial problems to which such cases would give rise, it would be

necessary to vest in an Ecclesiastical Administration, fully responsible to Parliament, the whole of the Church property, with powers, duly guarded and checked by locally elected Boards, of redistribution according to the real exigencies of each neighbourhood. But not only must Nonconformist *persons* be rendered admissible; Nonconformist institutions and property must be made susceptible of ecclesiastical adoption. To accomplish this, it might be provided that, on the surrender of any Dissenting chapel to the ecclesiastical trustees, such chapel should lapse to the National Church estate; and the congregation, ceasing to be a private club, would be incorporated into the public system, and, on certain conditions, would become entitled to a stipend computed in the compound ratio of its necessities and its beneficent activity. The conditions referred to need not be complicated, though their definition would require the utmost clearness and caution. They must be absolutely free from every possibility of interference with religious belief, and comprise no other inquiry than into the extent of social service rendered by a society as instructor of the poor and the young; and in the estimate of this a large influence should be assigned to the judgment of the district. To secure good service in the clergyman, a minimum of stipend should be fixed, and a part of it always drawn from the efforts and award of his congregation or neighbourhood. Not one of these provisions would in the slightest degree touch the independence of either the Church or the Dissenters. They do not meddle with the Prayer-Book, except *negatively*, by declining any longer to enforce its compulsory use; and the members of the Episcopalian communion might freely settle for themselves, in any representative assembly possessing their confidence, whether they would alter or wholly retain their present formularies. A similar freedom of internal organization and government would be left with every sect. Nor, again, is there the least interference with those Nonconformist Societies which might choose to remain on the

basis of pure voluntaryism. They are exposed to no disadvantage, made liable to no tax, and, for aught they would ever meet with in their own experience, might remain unconscious that any alteration had been made. One political change of serious magnitude would, however, be involved in such a series of measures. All ground would be removed for retaining the bishops in the House of Lords. The religious communion to which they belong would be only one among several churches embraced within the national establishment; and if the Episcopálians were to have their spiritual Peers, so must other religious bodies now introduced into a similar relation to the State. Justice would require that this political privilege should be either abolished or extended; and it cannot be reasonably doubted which method of equalization would be most agreeable at once to the political and the religious sentiment of the country. It is not our purpose to fill up this outline. We sketch it simply to indicate a course, which, however strange to the imagination now, appears to us more practicable,—no less than more desirable,—than either the unyielding retention of the Church as it is, or the entire repudiation of all national interest in religion, and the utter sacrifice, to the ends of mere financial economy, of the noble ecclesiastical endowments inherited from former times. We see nothing inconsistent with the sentiments proper to the devoutest Christian in a recognition of religion, left to its free development, as the highest department of a nation's culture; and think that the objection to this springs rather from low and irreverent notions of the State, than from any elevated conception of the offices of the Church. Not till the old Greek reverence for the public polity of a nation shall blend itself with the spirituality of the Christian's private and personal faith, will the restless antagonism of egotism with social power in secular affairs, of individual conscience with general law in morals and religion, cease and pass into a harmony.

IV.

PHILOSOPHICAL CHRISTIANITY IN FRANCE.*

It is the frequent error of a generous faith, to insist on the inefficacy, as well the wickedness, of persecution. The state of Protestantism in France presents formidable difficulties in the way of so consolatory a belief. The scanty circle of the Reformed Church in that country cannot be supposed to comprise all the fruits, which the genius of a great people would naturally gather from the Reformation; and the meagreness of the result is manifestly due, not to any national inaptitude for the revised faith, but to the fatal success of ecclesiastical and political coercion. Far from being indifferent to the corruptions of the Church, and careless as to the purity of Religion, our continental neighbours were the first among modern nations to betray their sensitiveness on these points. The revolt of the Paterins of Languedoc against the abuses of the clergy and the pretensions of the Papacy had been suppressed by the policy of Innocent and the sword of Simon de Montfort, two centuries before the ashes of Huss were thrown into the Rhine. Even before the close of the eleventh century, Roscelin, followed by the celebrated Abelard, had vindicated

* "Le Christianisme Expérimentale; par Athanase Coquerel, l'un des Pasteurs de l'Église Reformée de Paris." Paris, 1847. Christianity: its perfect Adaptation to the Mental, Moral, and Spiritual Nature of Man: by Athanase Coquerel, &c., translated by Rev. D. Davison, M.A., with a Preface, written expressly for the English Edition, by the Author. London, 1847.—*Prospective Review*, February, 1848.

the liberty of philosophizing with a popularity which awakened the alarm, and drew down the punishments of the Church. If a mediæval politician had been asked to name the country most likely to secede from allegiance to the Latin hierarchy, and to be the cradle of a new Christianity, it can scarcely be doubted that he would have mentioned France. That the fact turned out otherwise is no evidence against the sagacity of the prediction. The Papal Court provoked indeed the first fatal resistance at Wittenberg: but only because it had selected the German Empire as a hopeful field for its most audacious enterprise. No sooner had the schism ripened itself into an independent religion, than it found a hospitable welcome among the subjects of the house of Valois. In no country did it more equally divide the State with the old faith; so that the history of Protestantism in France is the history of its civil wars. Had Henry of Navarre been succeeded by a prince equally magnanimous, and the Edict of Nantes been maintained as the basis of religious peace, no one can doubt that the whole course of European history would have assumed a different, and,—according to all human estimate,—a more visibly beneficent direction. France, disappointed of her Reformation, was driven forward to her Revolution. The crisis of grave religious earnestness was allowed to pass: its remonstrances against wrong in the spiritual stage being spurned, slumbered till the evil assumed the palpable shape of debt and hunger; and then broke out, not from the sober middle-class as a cry of conscience, but from the populace as an outburst of despair. Every great national struggle leaves behind it a class triumphant and a class depressed; whose altered relations determine the destinies of many generations. The great social revolution of modern times was effected, in Germany by the princes and literati; in England, by the yeomen and the trades; in France, by the *plebs* and the press: and accordingly, the dominant influence remains, in the first case, with the secular powers and the Universities; in the second, with property; in the

third, with personal qualities and democratic passion. Protestantism, successful in Germany by the weapons of learning more than by popular resolve, never forgot its first alliance: philosophy, in that country, has been developed side by side with theology; instead of waiting, as in England, till religion compelled it to awake, or pushing itself forward, as in France, to an independent completeness and sufficiency. Among us, it is the interest of the speculative thinker to keep on terms with the divine. In the country of Luther, they may recommend, without mutual disturbance, in the same building, and to the same audience, systems variously contradictory of each other. In Paris, it is necessary for theology to conciliate philosophy. It is unequal to a contest with M. Cousin, and must accept of truce or treaty; the claims of Isaiah being admitted, with reservation of the rights of Kant; the futurities of the Apocalypse and the third Heaven of Paul remaining unchallenged, so far as may consist with the non-existence of both Time and Space. Notwithstanding the lofty tone of M. Coquerel's work, a painful feeling oppresses us that the conditions of his advocacy are essentially humiliating. We are fully alive to the importance of harmonizing faith and science, so long as each retains its own ground, its own method, its own language. But we do not love to see religion playing the lackey to philosophy; aping its pomps, assuming its livery, and standing behind its chair. Even where a less obsequious relation prevails, it is but too evident which power is patron, and which the client. We are forcibly reminded by the book before us, that Protestantism has no lineage of great recollections in France, no continuous literature, no course of development; that its noblest traditions were abruptly dispersed through other lands, and checked in their indigenous results. For anything that appears, this might be the first work of dogmatic theology in the French language. The absence of all historical matter, the absolute isolation of the author's system, the curious subordination of Scriptural to meta-

physical evidence, betray the peculiar conditions under which the task has been wrought out. Reformed Religion in fact has lost its parentage in France; presents itself as an orphan or a foundling without the shelter of an ancestral home; and, though willing to work its way in part by its own merits, submits not unnaturally to appear as the adopted child of that powerful philosophy, which holds empire over the gravest minds in the metropolis of European culture. M. Coquerel himself speaks of the Bible as "little known to the public at large in this country"; and that it is expected to be far less familiar to his readers than the "Fragmens Philosophiques," is evident from the whole structure of his work. His instrument for determining "the principal problems of the Human Mind," including the theory of Redemption, is the Logic of the eclectic school: and the dexterity of fence with which its weapons are wielded and its evolutions performed, contrasts strangely with the elementary simplicity of the Scriptural illustrations and proofs. These however are banished, in each of the six books, to the dark closet of an Appendix, into which few will be inclined to penetrate from the light and airy chamber of our author's reasonings; and in which still fewer will remain long enough to bring down their dazzled vision to so deep a dusk.

We refer to these features of M. Coquerel's book, that our readers may estimate its adaptation to a particular latitude of thought. It is a compromise with the spirit of the age in Paris. It accommodates its expression of what we hold to be eternal truth to the formulas of what we believe to be a transient fashion of the schools; and drives its admeasurements through the universe, from a base which, we fear, is ill-determined, and with instruments not unaffected by the metaphysical temperature of the hour. Strange to say, the subjective sciences, when they affect the most rigorous demonstration, and present a complexion most free from local and historic colouring, are the first to lose their persuasive efficacy by removal to a new place or

time. By attaching his Christianity to them, our author has probably consulted well the temper and wants of the church for which he labours. But his logic, we fear, will neither migrate nor keep. It is like an electric charge, carefully collected from a well-dried machine and in a crisp air: to be brilliant and effective, it must be discharged at once: for we live in a wet world; and in awaiting the weather of another generation, or even crossing the Channel to this cloudy land, it oozes off in the damps and disappears. Upon ourselves at least, notwithstanding the most favourable predispositions, we confess that the experiment has been vainly tried. We retain the most delightful impression of M. Coquerel's preaching. We know that his character is no less dignified than his intellect is rich. We concur in the main results of his theology, and rejoice that a faith so generous should have an advocacy so splendid. We see in the title of the book an aim altogether just,—to draw from the self-consciousness of man a confession of the divine beauty and authority of our religion. We were encouraged, by the full and interesting Preface to the English Edition, to expect a privilege most precious,—and be admitted to the interior of a mind affluent in the gifts of nature and experience:—

"The work," says M. Coquerel, "assumes to be a complete view of Christianity, under the twofold aspect of reason and faith, of human knowledge and Divine Revelation: the volume unfolds, if the labour answers the aim, a complete system of philosophy and of religion,—the religion of the Gospel, such as I consider and believe it to be.

"It is the labour of my whole life, the summary of the long studies of thirty years spent in ministerial duties.

"The purpose of this treatise would not have been answered if the book, a work of conscience, was not a work of perfect sincerity: it is even so much so, that the system of religion unfolded in these pages is complete: all the deep and awful questions put to the human intellect by the Christian faith are answered. I have said all that I believe: I have kept nothing in reserve, no sentiment of my mind, no secret of my under-

standing, no conviction of my creed. I have spoken with that tranquil security which faith inspires; and if I have always found myself at ease with respect to the risk of error, it is simply because I have felt myself supported by the calmness of sincerity: in the language of Montaigne, I always could say to myself, 'Ma conscience ne falsifie pas un iota; mon inscience je ne sçay.'

"Every thing is consistent in the book: the thoughts are bound up together: they all serve in their turn as premisses and conclusions: it belongs to the very essence of religious truths to be melted down into a condensed alloy, to be orderly disposed in a connected system. To detach a few fragments, to weigh some separate propositions, to discuss not the groundwork and the whole, but some scattered theories of the essay after breaking the links of the chain, would be to dispose of the volume without justice to the author, or without fruit to the reader."—Page xiii.

The programme is charming: and seldom have we opened a book with heartier hopes of finding rest for many a doubt and higher certainty for many a truth. Alas!—slowly and sadly have we been brought to confess it,—we find here many problems, few solutions. These logical "chains," that seem so securely stringent to those who fasten them, are too often like the fetters that bind us in our dreams; to the prisoner, defiant of fracture; ideal and non-existent to the observer. The inconclusiveness of M. Coquerel's reasonings appears to us precisely of this kind: they press upon the brain, and do no more. We have read books which have profoundly convinced us of the *falsehood* of the positions they maintained: no writings, for instance, have ever so cleared for us the foundations of religious faith, as Hume's sceptical Essays. But the present work is innocent of so perverse a result. It provokes no doubt; but it helps no faith. We see the language of demonstration, but are unconscious of the presence of argument. We often agree to the conclusions; only they seem considerably more certain than the premisses. And after passing from some semblance of rhetorical dialectics

to the luminous statement of a great principle with the pendant of a happy illustration, we are tempted to wish that our author had followed Lord Mansfield's advice,—given his judgment and withheld his reasons. The real, natural sources of human faith appear to us to be scarcely named; and in their place, are substituted processes so artificial, that we know not how any one can fancy them to be the ground of his assurance. Why, for example, do we believe in the resemblance between the human and the Divine mind?—Because man has no model but himself, from which to conceive of God; and we trust in this limit imposed upon our Reason for not debarring us from truth. Our author however replies, Because we know that God had no model but himself, from which to create man (p. 22). Again, most writers on Christian evidence are content to rest the divine authority of Jesus on his personal claims and the ascertained contents of his human life; and having been drawn to him thus, they sometimes throw a wider glance around him, and undertake to show that in the place of his birth and the age of his appearing there is nothing at variance with the good Providence of mankind. Our author proceeds in the inverse order: he finds his Redeemer, as Le Verrier found his planet, by calculating his *whereabouts*. He demonstrates, from the perturbations of history and the necessary action of the world's central forces,—that there is but one era and one spot at which Messiah *could* appear; and having predetermined the elements of his orbit, leaves it to common observers to point the telescope of experiment, and detect him, precisely where he is due, in the spaces of the Past. Jesus *must be* the Saviour: for either date or place would else be wrong. Once more: it seems conformable with nature, to know a little of our acquaintances before we grow fond of them,—to feel pretty sure that their honour is not a semblance or their genial graces a dream, ere we open our hearts to them; and though our continental neighbours are certainly readier in their social

advances than a stiff-necked Briton can well understand, we were not prepared to learn the extent to which they outstrip us. Their affections, not content with being faithful to past intimacies, are prophetic of future; and, like the incubating bird, hatch into reality the objects of their yearning instinct. The first notice men have that a friend *exists* is—*the love they bear him*: the caress of the parent proves that there is a child. M. Coquerel lives in a pretty populous city: he preaches every week to crowded assemblies: yet the best proof he can find that the earth is not a solitude breaks out in his exclamation, "Pleasant and affecting thought! I am *sure of the existence* of my fellowmen, *because* I love them!"—(P. 12.)

From these examples it will be evident that our author's reasoning is of the *a priori* kind. The large propositions which this method assumes for its point of departure; the vague terms with which it deals; the facilities it opens at every step for the admission of unauthorized assumptions; render it a treacherous instrument in the hands of the closest thinker; and where Spinoza and Clarke have not succeeded, it is no dishonour if M. Coquerel have failed. The main purpose of his work being to show the fitness of Christianity to human wants, Man becomes to him the measure of all things. The mind is not only the seat, but the standard, of all science; its conceptions being the representatives of possibility, its faculties the indicators of corresponding realities. Hence, all knowledge must start from self-knowledge; and not till we have noticed which way the mind's countenance is turned, and followed the sweep of its outlook, can we tell by what external objects we are environed, and in sketching our panorama of the universe, distinguish between the landscape and the mirage. With this idea, our author begins with an analysis of Self, as the prototype or skeleton sphere, whose shadow, projected by the central light of consciousness through the outer vault, hits upon all actual existences, and gives us the form of Nature and of God. Considering the extreme im-

portance of this analysis to all that follows, we feel bound to register one or two difficulties with which it stops us at the outset.

The source of our idea of Causality has given some trouble to philosophers. It has been referred, at one time to the observation of external successions,—at another, to the feeling of internal volition. Perhaps neither of these, if eternally isolated and unawakened by the other, would suffice for the explanation; and the collision of our spontaneous activity which knows beforehand what it would be at, with obstructions that check us without notice, is needful to give us the related and simultaneous ideas of *cause within* and *cause without*. This dual conception is equivalent, we think, to the consciousness of Self as contrasted with Not-self; and we have therefore no objection to say, that self-consciousness implies the notion of causality, with the belief in external objects that *now* operate upon us. But it does not imply any belief that *our own causality has been caused;* or refer us back to any time when we ourselves began to operate as agents. Our knowledge of such a time is derived, we apprehend, from quite a different source, from testimony and the current observation of human life; and no turning of the eye within would ever reveal it to us. We therefore cannot assent to the following passage, containing our author's proof of the creation of the human race:—

"Consciousness of existence is accompanied by two corollary notions, which are inseparable from it:

"1. This consciousness of being has not always existed, it has had a beginning; if my existence had not begun, I should know it, since I know my existence. I find myself in the present; in the past I do not find myself.

"An existence unknown to him who possesses it, is not an existence, properly so called: it reckons for nothing, or, more correctly speaking, it is to be reckoned otherwise.

"2. In this existence, of which he is conscious, man feels that his will or his power has had no part: he does not preserve it, and if it is not he who maintains it, it is not he who

has conferred it. He would employ for its maintenance, the power displayed to possess it. Whatever may be the cause of the existence of man it is something foreign to himself; it is apart from and without him. Life, that phenomenon which the human mind has never succeeded in defining, has not its source in life."—(P. 2.)

If simple consciousness of existence involved a knowledge of its commencement, it would necessarily report to us the *date* of its commencement. Enabling us to compare together a present in which we find ourselves and a past in which we do not, it must detect for us, at their point of contact, our moment of nativity; and every man could tell his own age, without resort to the parish register. As there have been years of childhood, of which our memory preserves no report, so, though other years or even centuries had been prefixed, it is quite possible that no trace of them might be found in our immediate self-knowledge.

Having alighted upon this supposed evidence of the origination of mankind, our author would seem to be on the verge of discovery as to the existence of God. He has obtained a glimpse of the hiding-place of some creative power; and by pressing another step in advance, we should expect him to apprehend the nature of that power, and to stand in the presence of the great Object of worship. He refrains however from proceeding further in this direction; and reaches his Theism by an argument which has no reference to causation, and would remain precisely the same, though the human race had no consciousness of a derivative existence. The mind, on close inspection, resolves its unity into five separate tendencies or powers—Intellect, Conscience, Affection, Sensitiveness to enjoyment, and Religiousness. Each of these inspires us with an ideal notion of something that would bring it entire content, and which secretly serves as a standard measure in every judgment that we make. Now every ideal thus employed as a rule must be more than a mental creation: it must have an objective reality answering to it. The ideal of the

fifth or religious faculty is an Infinite and Perfect Mind. Such a Mind therefore exists;—proved by our veneration, as our fellowmen are proved by our love.

There is a painful slightness and precariousness in this reasoning; and it is not without shrinking that we see the most solemn of truths thrown off, in this aeronautic way, to float in so fragile an ark through metaphysic skies. What possible reliance can be placed on the loose proposition "that the ideal cannot be *a mere abstraction*," "but that it is realized without us,—that it exists,—that it is a fact?" Our author himself directly contradicts this on the adjacent page, where he says, "A perfect man is *the mere abstraction* of our minds" (p. 4). And did we not join him in this contradiction, into what absurdities should we not run? An "ideal" must be an ideal *something:* and according to the arts or studies which engage men, do they acquire facility in improving their conceptions, and forming images of faultless objects. Within the dreams of every aspiring tailor there hang, no doubt, ideal coats,—poorly represented on the clothes-frame at his street-door; and the precincts of all livery stables are haunted by ideal horses of most tantalizing perfection; and, in such neighbourhoods, "all appreciations are founded on the measure of the ideal." But alas! are such garments "realized without us?" do these steeds of Diomed "exist" in "fact?" Whatever has "objective validity" dwells somewhere in space and time,—for this it is that constitutes *an object;* and until our author's ideals can be referred to by date and position, his Realism goes for nothing. We regret the more the rashness of this reasoning, because we think it susceptible, by close limitation to our *Moral* nature, of exhibition in a valid form. If it can be shown,—as we incline to believe,—that the mind, while capable of mechanical and æsthetic, is incapable of moral invention, but must be lifted into higher conceptions by the direct influence of another and higher nature, the basis of an argument is laid for proving the reality of an

invisible and Perfect Mind. We cannot pause to raise the structure now; but were unwilling to quit M. Coquerel's discussion of this point, without thus far qualifying our expression of dissent. Nor can we dwell upon the ground of our belief in the Unity of God; any further than to confess that our author's curt argument,—which he pronounces to be the sole possible proof,—"Since the ideal is one, God is one" (p. 20),—lies wholly beyond our comprehension.

The problem then stands thus: (1). Wanted, a Power for the creation of man: (2). Found, a Being absolute and infinite, the "ideal of *intelligence*." The question rises, can we avail ourselves of this discovery to supply the previous want? may we say, that the perfect Being is no doubt the Causal Power? To bridge this vast chasm between the Moral entity and the Physical agency of God, is perhaps the most difficult task in the great architecture of natural religion. M. Coquerel flies across himself with enviable speed; but lends us no wing, and builds us no road, by which we can follow him. Here is his passage from the notion of ideal Perfection to that of creative Causality:—

> "Creation, in God, is a natural consequence of infinity; and this explains how the fact of creation is completely a truth of faith, and not of reasoning. And since God is one, every thing except himself is creation; without this, the ideal would neither be one nor a being; and we have seen that religiousness in man tends, not towards the ideal personified in imagination, but towards the ideal personalized. Man, an individual, aspires towards God, an individual."—(P. 22.)

How "Creation should be a natural consequence of Infinity," we are at a loss to imagine. Ponder as we may the relation between finite and infinite, it yields us no conception of active power. Space is infinite; but does space create? To establish the origination of man by some foreign power, our author uses an argument which would equally prove the created nature of Deity. "Man," he

says, "does not preserve his existence; and feels that he has not conferred it."—(P. 21.) Did God confer his own existence? does he preserve it? can he extinguish it? Is it not even less at the disposal of the Will than ours? How then can the domination of Volition over Life be adopted as a test of independent existence? The truth is, M. Coquerel, like many of his predecessors on the *à priori* track, misses altogether, as it seems to us, the proof of Divine Causality; and thus leaves a fundamental unsoundness in his structure, which no subsequent ingenuity can repair.

In running over our author's catalogue of five faculties, a practised psychological eye will notice his silence respecting the *Will:* and the question will arise, why has an element, so important in the analysis of self, been altogether omitted? There is a looseness and fluctuation in the language referring to this subject, which prevents our giving a steady reply. In one place, we find the following:—

"This will, this power, this freedom of man (for freedom is only power), which cannot go so far as to rob him of the elements of his nature, does go so far as to disturb their equilibrium, to lead him to prefer and cultivate one faculty to the detriment of others, and even so far as to subject the religious to the inferior tendencies, though its province is to rule, because it is that which most nearly approximates the infinite. It is obvious that the liberty of a being, whatever it may be, consists precisely in the free use of the faculties inherent in its nature, and of all its faculties or powers without exception. There is no question of more or less free; freedom exists or it does not. Imagine the smallest hindrance; freedom exists no more; it is only possible on condition of being complete; it is only real on condition of being absolute . . . . . If I carry the slightest fragment, the smallest grain of shot, I march perhaps, but I do not march unimpeded, and wherever freedom appears suspended or violated by outward facts, if man thinks he acts, he is under the influence of an illusion; he does not perform acts; he only makes movements."—(P. 6.)

In the beginning of this paragraph, liberty is made to

consist in the power of selecting some favourite from among the five tendencies for special culture and indulgence. As such a power cannot itself be any member of the five, but descends upon them *ab extra*, the list of faculties already given cannot furnish a complete account of what a man finds in himself, and the classification is at fault. At the end of the paragraph, liberty is differently described :—as the absence of hindrance from any form of activity,—an unimpeded course for a tendency towards its appropriate end. In this sense, *every* force of our nature, so long as nothing is in the way, is free, and (since our author affirms freedom and will to be the same) *voluntary*. The will, therefore, on this supposition, is not an additional and omitted element in the analysis of self; but only the state or function of each faculty in its unobstructed isolation. Were we to accept this account of the matter, we must allow that the inferior animals possess more free-will than man: for their energies of instinct or affection possess them in more absolute surrender, and proceed to their end with less embarrassment, than the balanced impulses of the human mind. As these two ideas of free-will hopelessly diverge from one another, in the following sentences is a third, which will not coalesce with either :—

"To will or to act is to choose. Every action of a free being is a choice, and every choice implies an alternative, one at least.

"Thus, each of our tendencies is, as it were, placed in the face of an alternative.

"The alternative of the intellectual power is true and false.

"The alternative of the moral power is good and evil.

"The alternative of the affections is devotedness and selfishness.

"The alternative of our sensitiveness is contentment and suffering.

"The alternative of religiousness is fervour and indifference.

"These alternatives, between which it is the province of our freedom to choose, and these directions which each of our tendencies may follow, are indefinite; nothing limits, nothing terminates them; they never say, it is enough. Our faculties

are never loaded to the utmost; there is always room for something more."—(P. 30.)

Here we are brought back again to the original idea of *choice*:—a choice, however, no longer made *by* the *Will among* the *Tendencies;* but *by* each *Tendency between* opposite *directions*. This view therefore conveys a voluntary character into *all* our faculties: and the intellect in believing, the affections in loving, even sensitiveness in enjoying, perform acts no less intentional and controllable, than moral resolve springing out of a warm bed on a frosty morning. It also follows, that the adoption of a course abhorrent to the very nature of a tendency must arise from the deliberate choice of that tendency itself: and, when we meet with a wrong-headed, a selfish, a suffering man, we must say, it is his *intelligence* that elects error; his *affections* that prefer coldness; his *sensitiveness* that had rather be miserable.

Unable as we are to conciliate these varieties of phrase, we cannot expect to receive much help from our author in solving the great problem of necessity. His attempt introduces us to yet another shifting of his definition:—

"The mystery of free will," he says, "that ancient stone of stumbling in all religions, all systems of philosophy, and all schools,—lies in the point of separation of the two powers, the creating power and the power created. To ask *how man is free*, is to ask how the Creator, his work being finished, *separated himself and kept himself separate* from his creature and leaves him to himself."—(P. 24.)

If these questions be equivalent to one another, it follows that "freedom" consists in the non-intervention of God; and that all causes that are permitted a range of separate operation are *free*. But the great physical agencies of the universe, by which the motion and change of bodies are occasioned, are usually believed to be of this description,—powers commissioned to go of themselves.

Do they then repeat the difficulty of freedom? We should suppose so from the following sentences :—

"The same mystery appears again in *inactive* existences.

"We know not how the Creator's power ceases to weigh upon free beings, raises and keeps raised the sluices of the will.

"We know no better the manner in which creative power detaches itself from matter, and leaves physical laws and secondary causes to play their part.

"The hand of God, we say, launched the planets in the tangent of their orbits, and since that time the universe rolls on alone. But how has God withdrawn his hand? That is the question."

The withdrawal of God's hand then leaves the planet and the will alike free. The feature which constitutes liberty is common to them both. We claim no more for the will than we find in the star; and in proportion as the latter case sits lightly on our apprehension, should we disembarrass ourselves of difficulty as to the former. Is not this the way in which every reader understands M. Coquerel? Has he not established an analogy, in respect to freedom, between the will and the planet? Ought not the final inference manifestly to stand thus? 'The question then regards not the freedom of the will exclusively, but presents itself identically in the equal freedom of the planet?' How is it possible, then, not to be thrown aback by his own summing up of his argument?

"The question is not then respecting the freedom of the will, since it presents itself identically *where there is no freedom.*"

The frequency with which the conclusions thus administer an emetic upon the premises we have been induced to swallow, renders the study of this work an inconvenient discipline; like the tossing of Charon's boat to Lucian's cargo of philosophers; expecting at last, poor shades! a portion of Elysian wisdom, and doomed only to be relieved of all that they had learned above, and left shivering on Stygian banks.

In the present case, our author's retractation was evidently necessary to save his libertarian faith. He had mounted upon an analogy that could not but run away with him straight into fatalism. What more can the advocate of necessity require than that God should be allowed to stand at an equal distance from the products of volition and the effects of gravitation? If he is *no more separated* from our voluntary acts, than he is from the sweep of a planet, then he is as much the cause of the one as of the other; and is no less absolutely the author of our moral good and ill, than of the earth's vicissitudes of season. The prime condition of the whole doctrine of free will is the denial and demolition of the delusive analogy to which M. Coquerel has had recourse for its illustration.

Through all the indistinctness of our author's language on the subject of the will, one fixed misconception appears to us to pervade his book. He recognizes *no involuntary elements* in human nature. He reverses the error of James Mill, who dissipates volition into association, and resolves the most sustained exertions of thought into a passive procession of inevitable suggestions: and he makes the will cover the whole ground of our faculties, determining what we shall believe and love, no less than what we shall do. It must be owned however that if he had fallen into no snare here, he would have achieved an unexampled success. The precise distinction and mutual relation of the voluntary and involuntary functions of our nature constitute the critical point of all such systems. They intersect the course of every theory with a slippery passage, on which the foot of the firmest thinker seems unable to hold its place. If *all* the active phenomena be voluntary, as in our author's apprehension, we are responsible for all, and may deserve well or ill for our judgments and sentiments as well as for our acts. If *none* of them are voluntary, or (what amounts to the same) if those which are so called follow in inevitable sequence from involuntary antecedents, we are responsible for nothing, and cannot deserve well or

ill for our actions more than for our judgments. This is essentially the Calvinistic theory; according to which the will, *before* regeneration, is necessarily determined by corrupt inherited affections, and *after* regeneration, by superinduced divine grace: only it is inconsistently maintained, that while this second condition, not being the agent's work, carries no merit, the first, in which he is equally powerless, possesses infinite demerit. The followers of Hartley appear to us to exhibit, in different portions of their doctrine, the conflicting influences of these two extremes. The tendency of their Ethics is to claim every thing for morality and the will,—to enforce a stern doctrine of accountability,—to carry the feeling of duty through the whole mind, to accept no excuses from the arts of the Devil, and expect no help from the Spirit of God. The tendency of their Metaphysics, on the contrary, is to encroach upon and extinguish the Causality of man, to assimilate mental with physical agency, to resolve everything into mechanism, and mechanism into mere sequence; so as to retain in their conceptions no reservoir of real power save God himself. Each of these tendencies, if its demand were unimpeachable, ought to absorb the other: both however express an ineffaceable sentiment of our nature: and their continued co-existence, without any due adjustment of their boundary, attests at once the presence of an element of truth, and the inefficiency of that philosophy which cannot part with either, yet cannot reconcile the two. Only by the union within us of the freely voluntary with the involuntary can room be left for the joint presence of a human and a divine element in our spiritual life,—for obligation on the part of man and co-operation on that of God: and a theory which does not recognize and faithfully describe this union, fails to satisfy the primary conditions of a religious philosophy.

Our author's psychology conducts us directly to his moral theory. To a being entrusted with moral liberty, there is necessarily opened a career of indefinite approxi-

mation to God or alienation from him. A law of progress is imposed upon a nature thus endowed; and in case of unfaithfulness to such law, the doom of regress and degradation is its inevitable counterpart and substitute. This is no peculiarity of man in particular; but, as a direct corollary of free will, applies to all beings, in all worlds, who are susceptible of the idea of duty. There is clearly no fixed limit at which the spiritual movement of the soul towards or away from the infinite model of Perfection suffers arrest. It is therefore interminable; and immortality necessarily belongs to all moral beings. Nor need we hesitate to descend with this high claim to a lower stage of creation. Along with man there dwell upon the earth *unprogressive* races,—the animals submitted to his power. Now in the system and arrangements of a world, it is a law that the highest term of being it contains determines all that is below: the place is accommodated to the inhabitants: and the inferior members to the chief occupant. Hence the merely animal tribes share the human fate; the same incidents of birth, death, suffering, are entailed upon them. In this respect however they suffer an injustice: for it is the wickedness of man that has introduced suffering in the world, and brought it upon unoffending creatures. They have therefore a claim to compensation: which will be afforded, in M. Coquerel's belief, by their partnership in our immortality, as in our humiliation. No preacher of "judgments,"—no Jew inquiring 'Did this man sin or did his parents, that he was born blind,'—no Plumptre deprecating potato-rot or cholera by fast and humiliation,—ever proclaimed with less qualification than our author, that all physical evil is the result of moral evil. There was a time—the duration of which he does not define,—when "human progress was fulfilling its aim;" and so long, man was in Eden. The first step in a direction opposite to progress, by whomsoever taken, constituted the *Fall:* the effect of which is twofold: entailing, through the social or family relationship of man-

kind, a moral retardation, or *original sin*, on the whole species; and deteriorating, through the necessary correspondency between the tenant and the abode, the conditions of the globe itself, so as to create earthquakes and volcanoes, to remove the barriers from disease and decay, and for the first time annex pain to the processes of birth and death. This causal connexion between moral and physical ill, is not, moreover, a mere incident of our present phase of being. It is fixed in rerum naturâ,—and as activity is continuous, and human existence indefinitely prolonged, on the one hand the approach of the soul to its Creator or retreat from him may be perpetual, and, on the other, corresponding results of blessing or dismay must spring up along the endless path. Hence, rewards and punishments are alike eternal, and alike self-inflicted.—(Pp. 31. 85.)

We have endeavoured to present a faithful abstract of M. Coquerel's conceptions as to the moral history and physiognomy of the unredeemed world. Let us first ask, whether any one simply studying the past by the lights of science and interpreted tradition, the present by the help of consciousness and observation, and content to follow the indications of evidence, could possibly arrive at such a creed? and next, whether it agrees any better with the fair results of Biblical exegesis, so as to present a picture of the state of mind found in any one of the Scripture writers? It professes to be a deduction of purely *subjective* religion, —the report of self-consciousness respecting its contents and its surroundings; and not till it has been drawn forth whole and entire thence, is it ostensibly set up by the side of the sacred writings, in order to justify the exclamation, "See how the living spirit and the ancient letter say the same thing!" So rigidly does our author propose to adhere to his psychological method, that he expressly discountenances all appeal to chronological fact, and refuses to submit his theory to such a test. He tells us that before "the fall" there was no evil, and that all convulsions and disasters of the world will be found lower down. If we

are to try this assertion at all, the first step, one should think, must be to *reach the date* of the fall, that we may compare the state of things fore and aft, and see whether we stand at the *incunabula malorum.* We are put off however with the assurance that "it is of no consequence" to search into the duration before the fall, the precise period at which the fall took place, or the number of the first authors of the introduction of moral evil."

"These questions," he adds, "are to be discarded from the sphere of dogma: they belong to the domain of history; and whether left out of view or thoroughly examined, resolved in one sense or another, declared to be doubtful or unknown, they make no change whatever on the discoveries and definitions of Christianity, as expounded in these pages."—(P. 81.)

These are lofty words: only we are perplexed to understand how, at this sublime height above history, an historical event of the first magnitude,—in fact, a revolution in terrestrial nature, comes to be known. If M. Coquerel, like less philosophical divines, referred us plainly to the book of Genesis, and said, "Here is my authority: but for this I should know nothing of the matter,"—we should understand how to deal with his positions. 'Did the Hebrew cosmogonist mean this?' and 'Was he qualified to affirm it?' would then be our questions. But our author rejects the idea of any inspiration of the Scriptures on matters of science and history: he limits it to religious truth; and all religious truth is subjective: so that nothing is appealed to as divine in the Bible, except what he can in some way recognize in himself. But by what ingenious self-scrutiny does he discover, that the pains of childbirth are the effects of guilt; that the fires of Ætna are penal; that, until remorse was felt, the law of atmospheric equilibrium precluded the possibility of storms; and that our earliest progenitors found it agreeable to die? How far these things might disclose themselves to *mesmeric* introspection, we cannot say. The Poughkeepsie seer tells us

of the delight with which the intelligent inhabitants of Jupiter give up the ghost; and how they walk, not arm in arm as we do, but on all fours, like Kangaroos with the short legs set on behind and the long in front; and with what ingenuous modesty they amble along, protruding foremost the tremulous snout which reveals their spiritual sentiments. These disclosures about an existing planet seem to us to have no less probable a truth, and a much more certain prudence, than the theological delineation of the Pre-adamite earth: for while nobody can contradict the one, Geology has a word to say upon the other. The causes which prepared the world for man, and which operated through a dreary immensity of ages before it became the scene of any moral good or ill, have left their record every where upon the outer shell of our planet. In the attempt to trace the course of their effects, it has usually been deemed necessary to assume the prevalence, in the ancient globe, of energies vastly more tremendous than are witnessed now. To avoid this necessity, the question has no doubt been raised, whether by an exhaustive use, through unlimited time, of our existing stock of convulsive forces, the revolutions of sea and land might not be explained. But we have never before heard of a geological theory more tranquil even than this; and are at a loss to conceive how, with the gases in so mild a mood, the Andes were upheaved, and with the old cauldrons temperately simmering, the basalt could boil over and split the hills. The images presented in a geological museum do not help one's conception of a paradisiacal state: and notwithstanding M. Coquerel's guarantee against disease, we would forego the privileges of "the lacustrine period" in favour of the sanitary commissioners and a better drained condition of the world. Our author admits, with great fairness, that the natural history of extinct races of creatures presses against his hypothesis as to the dependence of physical suffering on moral transgression:—

"Science," he says, "has proved, that before the existence of man there had already been sufferings amongst the animals which peopled the earth, whether they were similar or not to those which now exist; and it has proved that in those primitive times animals devoured one another, as they do now."—(P. 43.)

Conclusive as these facts would seem, our author's philosophy is not without resources for escape from them:—

"It may be answered, that as we know not when our phase of progress will terminate, we know no better when it really commenced; that the union and connexion between animals and man was established even from before the existence of man; and, in fact, this merely amounts to saying that the servants preceded the master in their common dwelling-place.

"Still more, the physical sciences in their actual progress begin to open up and explain the providential truth, that the geological periods, the successive organizations of our planet before the creation of the human species, have from of old been preparatory to the present condition of the globe, the productions which clothe its surface, and the atmosphere by which it is surrounded. Pre-adamite organizations, animals of all kinds, whose fossil remains are deposited and scattered in prodigious masses at different depths in the bosom of the earth, constitute an essential part of this preparation, and the phenomena of their existence have served from of old to render possible in this world the more exalted phenomena of human life. Above all, let us never forget that these notions of *before* and *after* are always without value and without application when we speak of God, the Infinite Being; and that consequently, in the divine mind, the phenomena of geological periods are as intimately connected with the destiny of the human species as those of the present order of things."—(P. 44.)

If we rightly apprehend this reply, it declares that "the servants" not merely *preceded* the master in their common dwelling-place, but were *punished there* for his future sin, ages before he was in existence; that they found their "common dwelling-place" already fitted up as a prison-

house and furnished with the penalties of "the fall," while the very being who was to be put upon his trial appeared only in the far perspective of God's designs. What is this but to say, that, although "*no foresight can answer for mankind*" (p. 340), the Creator presumed beforehand on the guilt of a free being yet untried?—and that the effect indefinitely preceded the cause? So that after all, that "golden age," that "reign of the gods," when life was painless and unspoiled, and birth and death took place without a struggle, eludes us even in the guiltless era of the world. It was not worth while to set it up, when there was so little chance of its being permanently wanted. Where then are we to find it? Manifestly *nowhere* within the compass of objective reality: it is what our metaphysical neighbours strangely call a *truth of subjective religion*, disdaining the criteria of external fact; and what we should call a fiction of the fancy, valid for nothing except the empty semblance of compromise between the geologists and Moses. It is evident indeed that in "the Fall," as represented by M. Coquerel, there is nothing peculiar to the human race; nothing limited to a particular date or occasion; nothing, in fine, that does not hourly take place, wherever moral agents exist with unattained perfection. It is to be presumed that *every* race of beings endowed with free-will, must present some instances of neglected obligation, and exhibit traces therefore of "a fall." And though it is natural, in contemplating the operation of a permanent cause like moral evil, for the imagination to run back to its supposed commencement, and to fix a special interest on that moment, as representative of the whole tribe of succeeding phenomena, there is no real reason for assigning to the first case of slighted conscience effects different in kind or materially in degree, from those of present transgression. There are, alas! Adams in abundance "falling" every day;—beings not less recent to our world and fresh from God;—destined to be progenitors of families widening into races, who cannot

be unaffected, more than we, by the character of their predecessors. Every incident of the great moral drama passes in daylight before our constant observation; why delude us by pushing it back into the primeval darkness? Why exalt into a crisis of romance and revolution an event, which, however disastrous, takes its place among permanent human facts. As well might you charge all the carnage on the field to the first shot that was fired: its author, no doubt, is more likely to be named, and its effect to be marked, than any other element in the fight: but its fatal history might be told again of each component item in the thick vollies for which it gave the signal.

The attempt then to swell the results of early human transgression, and carry them throughout animated nature, appears to us altogether unsound. Still less can we approve of the compensation offered for this extravagance,—the claim of a future life for the tribes of inferior creatures. At best, and without quitting the zoological level, the wants of man, and his carnivorous propensities in particular, present some distressing problems in relation to the brute creation. But to us there is something unspeakably shocking in the idea of being drawn in a cab by a horse that one might meet on everlasting pastures, and of permitting immortal sheep to be driven to the abattoirs. The class of conceptions thus opened would be fatal, we are convinced, to the belief in a futurity for our own race. That belief demands a reverential estimate of the human being; a lofty appreciation of his affections, reason, and conscience; a conviction that these endowments can bear the weight of so glorious a lot. On these powers it is that the real burthen of our great hope is thrown. And these are precisely the attributes which put us *in contrast* with the brutes, and represent us as of different nature. Transfer the plea for immortality from these to the qualities that make us partners with the lizard and the lobster, and who will undertake to defend so desperate a cause? Faith has enough to overcome already in the spectacle of sordid aims,

of low and sensual passions, in mankind: if all the Mammalia are to crowd upon it with their petitions, it will inevitably be stifled to death.

The attention which our author bestows on the proof and illustration of the Fall, is explained as we approach his exposition of the Christian system. With him, Christianity, in its essence, is not the Impersonation of the Divine Character and of the Human Ideal in Jesus of Nazareth: it is not the miraculous disclosure of a Future Life: it is not the authoritative announcement of a system of Doctrine and Duty: but it is the accomplishment of Redemption,—the reversal of the Fall,—the arrest of mankind in their course of alienation from God, and the restoration of them to their destiny of advance towards him. It needs a personal Redeemer to achieve this task, and become "a *Stator* on the way of evil:" and as on the one hand he has to touch upon the work of God, and on the other to become the leader of men, he must be at once "the *alter ego* of the Infinite Being," and the equal brother of mankind. He must pass through the four great *moments* of human existence, — birth, life, death, resurrection. Whilst his work is subjective,—in the heart of man,—his credentials and manifestation must be objective,—in outward facts. He must not take the world by surprise, but must be fore-announced by Prophecy. He must not be inconspicuous to contemporaries, but must be introduced to them by Miracles,—whose peculiar evidence is *essential* to eye-witnesses, but expires with them. The nature of his office determines the *period* of his coming: he must not delay, till the race is irrecoverable: he must not appear, till hope of its self-restoration is at an end: we shall therefore find him at the crisis of Society's lowest moral descent; i.e. in the reign of Tiberius. The same considerations determine his *place*. All the tribes of mankind divide themselves into progressive and stationary races, according as they practise monogamy or polygamy: the progressive races however, quickest in evil as in good, reaching their

ultimate corruption first, in consequence of the more virulent action of Idolatry among them. They occupied the Mediterranean shores; and there accordingly, in the centre of the world that was in retreat from God, was it needful for the Redeemer to appear. Yet a stationary race was best fitted for the long and patient prophetic waiting for his arrival: and by presenting himself among the Hebrews, he touched, on either side, the opposite elements of ancient civilization. The "*testimony of redemption*," i.e. the *predictions*, and the *historical manifestation* of its Advent, constitute Revelation; from which we have no right to expect anything beyond this bare witness to a fact. The personal qualification for giving the testimony is *Inspiration*, a Divine communication of the requisite knowledge to the human understanding,—not verbally (for "God utters no words"), but through the medium of dreams and ecstacy, or mental states carrying with them their own subjective evidence of authority.

This scheme, unfolded in the 3rd and two following Books, ranges over many interesting topics. But they are so related and disposed, as all of them to revolve around the notion of *Redemption* as their centre. *That* is the *thing done;* to which Revelation is but the witness; which again has Inspiration as its qualifying means. To determine therefore what this redemption is must be our main anxiety. And fortunately we must be in a favourable position for this purpose. For we have to deal here, with *un fait accompli*. Before the fact, prophecy could only say, 'It *will be* done;' at the time, miracle could but declare, 'It *begins to be* done:' but now, history and experience spread samples of it before us in the minds of individuals and nations during eighteen hundred years. M. Coquerel's is not one of the ordinary systems of theology, which can evade this appeal to fact. He does not make salvation an affair of the next world only, that may give no sign in this. With him, both lapse and redemption are changes of character in the *present* phase of being,—continued indeed

hereafter, but having their primary seat and manifestation here. What then is that moral revolution which reverses the Fall and is termed redemption? And has Christendom realized this change?

Our author repeatedly defines Redemption by the phrase "return towards God," and renders it evident that he denotes by it spiritual progress (p. 349). In individuals its presence declares itself by the re-entrance of the mind into its proper sphere, so as to escape from the humiliations of its fall (p. 127): in the world at large, by the commencement of a new and higher civilization (p. 145). What more than this may lie concealed under the words "the sublime *secret* of redemption" (p. 352) we do not presume to conjecture: this is all that the present work communicates.

Now in proof of that aberration from his sphere which the gospel is to remedy, our author appeals to that sense of short-coming, that disproportion between aspiration and achievement, of which every thoughtful man is conscious. But if this be proof of the need and absence of redemption, then the best Christians are the least redeemed. It seems to us strange that, in evidence of ruin should be adduced the sentiment most characteristic of healthful advance. That this consciousness is *painful* is very true: that it is *evil*, or bears witness to any *growth* of evil, cannot be allowed. Instead of regarding it as the wreck and trace of a lost perfection, must we not recognize in it a distinct provision for unlimited progress? From the mind that treats its own higher perceptions with insult or neglect, it speedily passes away: but we know no excellence so divine, —not even that of Christ himself,—as to escape its shade. Its disappearance, here or hereafter, would dry up at the roots every immortal possibility; and, with all the fair show of joy and health, would be, like the beauty of consumption, the sentence of certain death. We should appeal to it, therefore, to prove rather that man is *in* his sphere, than that he is "out of his sphere." Still,—whether Christianity

gives it or removes it,—whether its presence or its absence indicates an "approximation to God,"—we do not see how *individual* believers can now-a-days be spoken of as "redeemed:" being born into the progressive influences, they have not undergone that change from a retrograde condition which is necessary, in M. Coquerel's own view, to give fitness to the application of the word. The phrase is only a misleading equivalent of other and sufficient terms, by which we usually describe moral and spiritual improvement.

Redemption, then, must be looked for at the point of transition into Christianity, and dealt with as an historical fact. Our author states the case thus, as to the world at large:—

"It is impossible not to perceive, that, since the beginning of human annals, since the time in which, ascending through the darkness of antiquity, we see the first dawnings of history, evil, error, and crime went on increasing till the advent of Jesus Christ, human activity followed its illegitimate alternative, and more and more yielded to its evil impulse; humanity retrograded; and mankind went continually further from God, by error after error, and iniquity upon iniquity; there was an increasing progression of perdition.

"With Jesus Christ, mankind stops on the fatal road and goes back; it retraces its steps towards God, towards truth and duty, towards charity and peace; it re-ascends the long untrodden paths of knowledge and virtue; it reconquers its likeness to God, and since the advent of Jesus Christ, there is an increasing progression of salvation."—(P. 144.)

Such wide-sweeping judgments upon the past cannot well be submitted to any satisfactory test,—in itself a proof of their questionable value. Without losing ourselves in vague discussions, we will merely express our surprise, that any one familiar, as our author must be, with the state of Europe and the East from the time of Caligula to that of Charlemagne, should describe that period as a "re-ascent of the long untrodden paths of knowledge and virtue;"

and, in contrast with it, the equal antecedent period, as "a progress to the climax of perdition." The Advent of Christ nearly bisects the interval between the founding of the city and the crowning of the new Emperor of the West. It must be a strange historic balance, fabricated by monkish hands, or set uneven by Frankish chronicler, that can really give preponderance to the latter half; even though Christian zeal should throw into the scale, as a make-weight, the Saxon sword of Charlemagne, and the hammer with which his grandfather broke the Saracenic power. These eight centuries of ever-deepening gloom comprise the widest miseries, the most unrelieved corruption, the vastest obliteration of every acquired good, of which the annals of mankind retain any trace: yet we are called upon to prefer this moral and social disintegration,—simply because it is on this side the Christian era,—to the magnificent rise and spread of Roman civilization! We cannot even perceive (and it has always appeared to us a painful mystery) that during the process of social degradation and decline, Christianity assumed the attitude of protest and antagonism. The few gleams that burst from the clouds were thrown by the sinking orb of Pagan greatness, or the indignant flash of oriental reformation:—the virtues of the Antonines, the vigour of Diocletian, the philosophy of Julian, the learning of Boethius, on the one hand; and on the other, the transitory brilliancy of Palmyra, and the theocratic conquests that broke forth from Mecca. What counterpart to these things can be found in the morals of the Byzantine Court, the literature of the patristic schools, the theology of the Greek priesthood? Of all the objectionable elements in the Roman Catholic religion, there is not one which seems to us so mischievous, as the necessity which its theory creates of corrupting and falsifying history; of drawing forth into special veneration ages replete with puerile ignorance and revolting crimes; of covering with the gloss of a false sanctity characters in the past whose naked aspect would excite in the present only horror and disgust; and

thus of misdirecting the moral perceptions of its disciples, to save the repute of its ecclesiastical discipline. Into this very error the larger and more generous zeal for Christian evidence has betrayed our author. The language he employs would have more the appearance of truth if Jesus Christ had appeared in the tenth century instead of the first. So long as his religion operated chiefly on the South European and African races, and co-existed with the remains of Greek and Roman civilization, its favourable influence is difficult to trace: but as soon as it comes into full contact with the Teutonic tribes, and is invested with the exclusive trust of their education, its genius is rapidly unfolded, and it betrays itself divine.

On the whole, we cannot think M. Coquerel successful in his attempt to make the Advent in Galilee the centre point of world-history,—*ὀμφαλὸς ἐριβρόμου χθονὸς*. It cannot but lead to distorted views of things to force all human events and characteristics into a linear path, first dipping into an abyss of seeming hopelessness, and then suddenly rising again towards the upper light. God does not set his designs upon a railway, to run so thin a course. They must have breadth as well as length, and require dimension every way. As the physical earth proved not to be a superficies, of which the Delphic stone could claim to be the central boss, but a globe of many continents and seas clustered into several groups; so is there something spheriform in the Providence of humanity, with the nucleus of many a different system, and types of various life: and it is not by sacred boastfulness about our own in particular, but by docile comparison of all, that we can hope to compute the radius of God's plan, and circumnavigate its everlasting round. It is not in the least requisite to the authority of Christianity as a divine revelation, that it should occupy the historical position which our author assigns to it: and we regret that his conception of it as a *Redemption* should have led him to advance claims for it, which it is but too easy to refute.

But the peculiarity which most forcibly strikes us in M. Coquerel's book is the singular obscurity in which he has left the Redeeming influence itself. He demonstrates *à priori*, the necessity of a Redemption: he affirms that it has been realized: he finds the place, date, and person, whence it is to be traced. But by what transforming efficacy a revolution so great has been wrought is not declared. Explicit about the antecedents, emphatic upon the consequents, our author is silent as to the crisis of power itself. He presents the drama of Christianity, with omission of the part of Christ; who is indeed talked about, —has his rank defined, his relations explained,—yet does not himself personally appear. We hardly know how to describe to our readers the feeling of mystification on this matter with which we closed the book; asking ourselves, 'But what *is* this great redeeming force, ushered in by such an immense apparatus, and followed by a complete turning in the human tide?' The work reminds us in this respect, of certain charts we used to study, showing the magnetic lines of equal variation in different latitudes, and seeking, by help of their converging directions, to discover the place of the magnetic pole. Innumerable curves, after sweeping over land and ocean with constant mutual approach, suddenly broke off, and stood unanimously pointing to a centre where they ought to meet: but the spot of mysterious attraction, secretly present on the blank paper, was not shown; or if mathematically indicated, claimed no real existence in the geography. The curious wonder that fastened the eye to that empty space,—the residence of hidden power,—is revived by our author's way of approaching and receding from the redeeming point, laying down all its surroundings, tending thitherwards across every latitude and longitude of time; yet leaving the force itself in the waters of vacancy, and establishing for it no reality. Since it is a force upon the souls of men, it must consist in some new ideas or new emotions; it implies the discovery of truths

which must be susceptible of expression, or the influence of fresh admirations whose objects may be named. We are therefore impelled to ask for a specific definition of this power. Nor have Christian writers in general any difficulty in answering the demand. They have usually considered Jesus as the medium of a new disclosure of divine truth and higher law; and have found the efficacy of his religion in belief of the doctrines and submission to the obligations. M. Coquerel, however, has cut himself off from this reply. With him, Christ is not the introducer of a Revelation: but Revelation is the introducer of Christ; and having completed the attestation which brings him on the stage, it simply leaves him there and retires. There appears, accordingly, an enormous disproportion between means and ends. Our author's claims for all the instrumental apparatus of Christianity,—for prophecy and preliminary history,—for miracle and contemporaneous testimony,—are positive and lofty. His account of the Christianity itself to which this vast procession leads, is negative and vague. The Gospel is "not a system of instruction" (p. 281). Instead of communicating, it takes as axiomatic or admitted, "all truths concerning God, his attributes, creation, providence, free-will, and immortality," the unity of the human race and fraternity of men (pp. 287, 288), as well as all moral rules respecting "the constitution of a family, that of property, individual liberty and political order, and finally, suicide" (p. 289). On the other hand, it "holds back or avoids" all truths respecting "the Divine nature of Christ," "the union of soul and body," "the relation between the living and the dead," the "end of the world," the constitution of the future life and the mutual recognition of friends there, the nature of angels and demons (pp. 295—298). The only truths which it is said to determine by facts, are "the identity of man through the process of death," and "the existence of angels, good and evil" (p. 285): and even in setting these questions to rest, Revelation appears to be carried beyond

its defined function of "testifying Redemption." When to this we add, that Christianity, in order to vindicate its spiritual character, must, in our author's view, free itself from disciplinary rules,—from every remnant of form, —from the letter of Scripture,—and from dogmas,—no less than from clerical influence and human authority,—some wonder may be felt at the alchemy of his philosophy, which, after ransacking the world for its ingredients, and exposing them to the white heat of its refining process, finds its crucible empty as at first, instead of heavy with its residuum of gold. For our own part, we heartily concur in M. Coquerel's negative verdicts, and are content to receive at the hands of Christianity, the pure truths of natural piety, cleared from all that oppresses and degrades them. We receive these however through the mind of Christ, and deeply coloured by the transmission. His divine life has disclosed a fresh image and ideal of human perfection;—changed and raised the standard of aspiration;—and, above all, furnished a new type, representative of God, and determining the spirit of every heavenly hope. In this, his personal occupancy of our reverential and trustful affections, has consisted, we believe, the essential power of Christianity. Only, for the exercise of a function like this, we cannot pretend that the prophetic expectations of twenty centuries, the wonders of supernatural birth, or even the escort of a train of outward signs, appear to be indispensable: if there be but miracle enough to fix the eye, and give time for the impression to sink into the heart, and propagate itself from age to age, the ends of such an inspiration are achieved. We cannot at all feel the force of our author's emphatic assertion, that in order to effect a redemption,—that is, a subjective change,—there *must* be objective miracles. We can understand this doctrine from those who take Christianity to be "a system of instruction," and who deny the natural power of man to appreciate that instruction from its intrinsic character; provided they hold,

at the same time, that miracles, being deviations from the laws of nature, are special acts of God; and provided further, they conceive the operation of time and distance in weakening supernatural proofs to be insignificant. But M. Coquerel denies every one of these propositions. He makes Christianity subjective, and his whole work brings it to the appeal of consciousness; yet, on behalf of prophecy and sign, he declares the insufficiency of that appeal. He pronounces miracles to be, like planetary perturbations, within the compass of natural law; yet assigns to them a demonstrative power which requires them to lie beyond the resources of nature. He confesses that the evidence afforded by miracle exists only for eye-witnesses; yet while insisting on its necessity for *their* faith, maintains its superfluousness for all others. If the question about the *à priori* need of miraculous witness is to be opened, and a competition of want is to be set up between the prophet's contemporaries and his successors, we fear that distant times possess the more urgent claim. Surely the divine messenger has a more interrupted and difficult contact with posterity than with his associates: and if there be any persons on behalf of whom the natural resources of persuasion require to be enlarged by extraordinary displays of power, it must be the strangers separated by ages, and deprived of the thousand lights of living proximity. Whether a religion spreads from East to West in space, or from generation to generation in time, in either case it is given to *new minds:* there is no more of simple continuity in the one instance than in the other: an agency needed as a *missionary* witness cannot be pronounced useless as a *perpetual* witness: and whoever argues the question upon this speculative ground of a presumed antecedent necessity, precludes himself from closing the plea of continued miracle against the Roman Catholic Church.

In these remarks we intend simply to express an opinion, that the questions in relation to prophecy and miracle are historical and critical, and are totally incapable of phi-

losophical prejudgment. It is our author's *treatment* of the topic, more than his results, which fails to satisfy us. He has a favourite auxiliary in all his arguments: he declines the verb *To be* in only one form, *Must be.* We have an old-fashioned prejudice in favour of the tenses *Has been* and *Is.* We cannot profess any intimate familiarity with the numerous necessities of this universe. It is chiefly the ambition to prove too much that challenges objection to M. Coquerel's reasoning. For example, when he contends that it would be improper to grant us, in religion, more than a frugal allowance of evidence, because "too much revelation would destroy free will" (pp. 234. 301), a host of embarrassments are conjured up by the suggestion. If then Christ had a higher assurance than we, he had less free will, and suffered the very evil from which God has protected us: in proportion to his superior perception, his uncommunicated light, he lived under different moral conditions, and his example carries no obligation; and the Omniscient Being must be without free will at all. Again, our author undertakes to tell us what things it is better that we should not know, and so explains the "reserve" of Scripture, assuring us that it was "intentional." He appeals to the mischievous prophecies, often re-produced, of the end of the world,—to the mystical attempts to establish an intercourse between the living and the dead,—to the horrors of demonology, in order to convince us that silence on these points was indispensable.

"What is the nature of angels? On this subject the Gospel is mute, to the extent of commonly designating angels by their functions and their names of honour; and even sometimes as young men. With respect to demons or bad angels, the Gospel explains itself still less positively; and it is very remarkable that its language is often much more allegorical on the subject of superior beings fallen from their holiness, than when it speaks of spirits which have remained pure. The horrible errors into which the demonology of the middle ages fell, and

which are yet far from being extirpated, are sufficient proofs how necessary it was not to give any plausible pretexts to impure and unholy imaginations. Between the impossibility of saying nothing or of saying every thing, revelation has said the least possible, and guarded itself against becoming the involuntary accomplice of superstition."—(P. 298.)

Surely this is strange argument. To establish the evil of too much knowledge of a certain subject, our author adduces the mischief of ignorance and mistake upon it; and virtually exclaims, 'If it was so pernicious to know *next to nothing*, how dreadful it would be to know *the whole!*' Or, if it be admitted that it was not the portion of *knowledge* allowed, that wrought the ill; then the evil must be referred either to the remaining *ignorance*,—which more revelation would therefore have blessed us by removing; or to the mere *discussion* of the subject, which Scripture has said enough to raise. In fact, who can deny that the state in which such questions as demonology are described as being left in the Bible, is precisely such as to lead the disordered imaginations of men to the very mischiefs here deprecated; which have arisen from acccepting as necessarily true what the Evangelists imply in their narratives of demoniacs. And what room would have been left for such abuses, if we had been directly told, either that there are no demons, or that they are cut off by an impassable barrier from relations with our world? The principle involved in this species of reasoning appears to us most dangerous and fallacious. Once allow that there is any test for determining beforehand what it is good, and what it is bad for us to know; and rules must follow for the repression of curiosity, and the restraint of intellectual freedom. There can be no more monstrous presumption than for a being in the dark to hold forth upon the disadvantages of light. If he is ignorant of a subject, how can he anticipate what would ensue on the removal of that ignorance? While the cloud is round him, he cannot lay down the landscape which its dispersion will unveil.

It is however the piety, and by no means the timidity, of our author, that engages him for the moment in this questionable defence of reserve in Revelation. He would have been equally ready to take the other side had God seen fit to disclose to us what is now kept secret. M. Coquerel has, after all, a genuine love of light: and there is a noble tone pervading his claim for intellectual freedom within the church, indicative of a generous and high-minded faith.

"Let every one guard himself from supposing that this liberty can ever be prejudicial to faith—to truth. It will, on the contrary, eminently favour the influence of Christian doctrines over the human mind, for this plain reason—that the greatest number of persons are turned away from the faith by disputes concerning its truth; what disgusts the world with dogmatizing is, that even now, to enumerate dogmas is to excite strife; to enforce convictions is to rouse enmities; and, nevertheless, there is only one kind of firm, consolatory, and saving faith, which suffices as a guide and support in life and in death: that is the faith which is the result of a man's own inquiries.

"This freedom is also the only means which the Lord has conferred upon Christendom, to found and maintain religious peace between its various priesthoods and their Churches. During eighteen centuries this peace has been sought in vain, in an identity, homogeneity, complete harmony of faith and teaching. Experience, therefore, is decisive; experience which has come down to us through the tumult of so many dreadful religious wars,—through torrents of human blood, and the flames of multitudes who have suffered martyrdom at the stake. Religious peace is not to be founded by a harmony of intellects (minds) but a harmony of hearts; and this last is impossible, till we fully recognize the sacred duty of mutual respect for sincere opinions, and for the fundamental principle of the value of sincerity before God and man."—(P. 392.)

Whatever obscurity may hang around M. Coquerel's conception of Christianity, most of the definite propositions which he affirms respecting it we find to be true of our own. He does not suppose that its destinies are completed in this life; but follows it into the future phases of human

progress; and ventures to trace the influences of the "celestial gospel," upon the minds then first opened to its light. And if by "the Gospel" we understand the personal ascendency over lower natures of the great model-soul, the divine ideal of humanity,—this essence of our religion is doubtless common to both spheres: and is so far from being arrested by death, that it then first attains its power with the transition from traditional reverence to personal discipleship. For the foreigners to Christendom, whether sage or barbarous, a glorious naturalization is there reserved.

"Undoubtedly, the great men and great geniuses of antiquity, who served the cause of truth and virtue as far as the light of their conscience and reason rendered such service possible—Socrates, Aristides and others—were astonished, the instant after death, to give up their souls with joy unspeakable to developments of which they had no anticipation, and to read, in some measure, a heavenly Gospel upon the shell of their ostracism, or the lip of their cup of hemlock. Titus rejoiced to understand, that in eternity not a single day was lost for well-doing; and Epictetus, at having discovered that true liberty of a wise man, which shall be guaranteed for ever in heaven. Undoubtedly, the unhappy savage, who has never displayed any other virtue than barbarian firmness in enduring the prolonged torments of the fatal stake, will exchange his cruel heroism for a state of perfection, of which he never could have entertained the slightest idea; here below he was hardly a man;—the feelings of his humanity have been reserved for a better state."—(P. 404.)

Whether this conversion will be open even to those "whose ignorance or infidelity of the deepest dye has been only a resource of immorality," or whether the path of return to God is determinately closed with the present life, is a question on which the most rigorous theology has long begun to speak with a significant reserve, and which our author unhesitatingly resolves in favour of the merciful side of the alternative. He fully accepts the doc-

trine of Universal Restoration; and we can ill afford to quarrel with any process of thought which tempers the severity of ordinary creeds with so benign a hope. We do not think however that M. Coquerel, in repudiating the usual arguments in favour of his own conclusion, has succeeded in substituting any better, or in removing the question from its old ground. He relies mainly on the assumption that a self-conscious being cannot suffer without being instructed by his sufferings, both as to their causes and as to their cure; and conceives that efforts of successful self-recovery must thus be awakened and sustained; that punishment, in short, of its own nature becomes transformed into chastisement. We fear that this argument for the self-destructive nature of evil labours under a fatal defect. It supposes that seeing clearly and feeling deeply are the sole conditions of acting wisely; that remorse must lead to exertion, and conscious knowledge stimulate recovery. It overlooks the prostration of will induced by unfaithfulness, and expects strength from the brilliant lassitude of decline. There is a point in the history of the guilty mind, at which fear provokes to flight no more,—the hands are only wrung in stationary anguish, —and the lips, too hopeless for prayer, can but curse the day of birth. And thenceforth, the finest discernment of moral cause and effect affords no security for amendment; the most "*instructive*" punishment is but a remedy brought when the pulse is gone. In this condition of the mind, motive, in the ordinary sense, is only thrown away: self-cure becomes impossible: but not every source of healing is yet cut off. There is an openness still to the agency of pure and loving beings; the broken pride, the conscious shame, the incapable will, are even singularly prone to lean upon a nobler nature, to take the shelter of an unreproachful affection, and become docile as a child to a loving and protecting power. Restoration therefore must resort for its hope to this spiritual *clientela*, which surely harmonizes well with the conceptions of a reasonable faith.

And with this supplement, our author's argument, relieved of the most embarrassing class of cases, becomes better able to sustain the weight it is called upon to bear.

Some of the gravest considerations on his own side of this question are treated with a slight and off-hand dismissal which we cannot admire. Surely, for instance, there is a foundation in natural reason and justice for the feeling, that the transgression of a finite being cannot merit infinite penalty, and the sin of a moment incur a never-ending woe. M. Coquerel pronounces the argument "worthless:" for—

"The objection drawn from the disproportion in extent, so to speak, between time and immortality, transports the intuition* of Time beyond the limits of this world."—(P. 208.)

* It is to be regretted that, after the example of the English Editors of Kant, and adhering to the analogy of the French, Mr. Davison has expressed the meaning of *Anschauung* by the word *Intuition*. This term, in English, is pre-engaged. It denotes the *immediate*, as opposed to the *mediate*, recognition of truth or falsehood in a proposition. The mental act to which it refers requires a *predication* for its object, and is an act of the *understanding*. The term *Anschauung*, on the other hand, denotes the *Representation* of an object, whether of perception or of imagination; a mere solitary image, without any relation involving truth or falsehood. This mental *looking at* a *thing* (not at a *judgment*) is referred by Kant to the faculty of *Sense:* every act of which pre-supposes, as its condition and ground, the *representations* of *Space* and *Time*.

Having touched thus far upon the Translator's task, we will add that, in general, its execution appears to us to merit the praise accorded to it by the Author in his Preface. We have noticed, however, a few blemishes, which, for the sake of any future Edition, it may be well to mention.

Page.	Line.	
33	— 26.	'*In*accomplissement' is rendered 'accomplishment,' instead of '*failure*.'
84	—Title.	'Peines de l'Eternité' is rendered 'Eternal Punishments.'
91	— 15.	'Soulevées' is rendered 'removed,' instead of '*raised*.'
93	— 26.	'Would' instead of '*should*.'
100	—Title.	'Distraction' is rendered 'distraction,' instead of '*absence*' or '*abstraction*.'

It will be seen that reference is here made to the Kantian doctrine, which declares that Time has no objective existence, but is a mere form of human thought,—the subjective ground on which it is given us to represent to ourselves the phenomena within or without us. This doctrine, by shutting up Time and Space (which comes under the same category) with the human constitution, seems to forbid our carrying out into the sphere of external realities any propositions involving these representations. The systematic enforcement of such a prohibition is manifestly impossible: not only would all the sciences of quantity and proportion, of antecedence and sequence, disappear; but as Space in its vanishing carries with it whatever is external, and Time, whatever is internal, the entire sphere of all reality dissolves away, and nothing remains about which an affirmation can be made. Under these circumstances, wise men will submit to the laws of their own minds; and be content to wear the spectacles which God has given them. Pull them off, and Man, Nature, God=0; keep them on, and Space and Time=Infinite, comprising or coalescing with Man, Nature, God. As no one can affirm the first equation without *ipso facto* denying it, there seems no resource but to accept the second. If any one, however, regardless of consistency, chooses to shift about from one to the other, it is evident

Page. Line.

129 —Last. 'Dans le *courant* de notre théorie' is unaccountably rendered 'in the *elimination* of our theory.'

155 — 5-7. The sentence, obscure in the original, is unintelligible in the translation. The meaning, however, is, that 'Idolatry is no more than the consolidation into instituted forms of the false, the bad,—of disordered affections and selfish practice.' '*Degenerescence*' is not English; and in its spelling violates the Latin analogy.

302 — 27. 'Faith in human religiousness' makes 'religiousness' the *object* of faith. 'L'établissement de la foi dans la religiosité humaine' means 'the establishment of faith within the religious faculty of man.'

395 — 25. 'Doit resulter' is rendered '*ought to* result.'

that wonderful effects may be produced. Glasses on, the order of things is real: glasses off, the order is gone. He gains a power of annihilation *ad libitum;* can spirit away any disagreeable proposition, without the trouble of examining it,—for it is sure to have some element of time or space in it, and to vanish when they are turned out of the window. In short, he can reserve chronology and room enough for himself and his theories, and dislodge everything else into the inane. M. Coquerel is much given to the use of this enchanter's wand, and the solutions he effects by it are curiosities in philosophy. In the example adduced above, he contends, that no duration of punishment can be disproportioned to guilt, because time does not exist, and can have neither proportion nor disproportion of parts. We find also the following arguments:

God regards the longest and the shortest,—the greatest and the least,—sufferings with the same sentiment: time and degree being nothing in reality, nothing therefore to Him.—(P. 408.)

The Word might be in the beginning with God, and yet God be prior to the Word; because, as there is no Time, there can be no Priority.—(P. 461.)

There is no difficulty in the texts which, on the crucifixion day, place Christ, with the thief, in Paradise; which, before the resurrection day, send Christ to Hades to the spirits in prison; and which describe his ascension into the clouds; because, the space being unreal, all problems of place disappear.—(P. 460.)

Heaven and Hell cannot be *future* and *external*, but must be *present* and *internal;* because there is no Time or Space.—(P. 397.)

Christianity,—the attested *fact* of a Redemption,—though its records speak of a Coming of Christ and End of the World, contains no local or chronological proposition; for time and space are only its unreal frame-work.—(Pp. 395. 398.)

The Scriptures, in affirming that God exists *at all times*

and *in all places*, must be understood to deny the reality of *any time* and *any space*.—(P. 105.)

The existence of animal suffering *before* the Fall is no objection to its being regarded as the *consequence* of the Fall; for as Time is nothing, priority is nothing.—(P. 44.)

Other examples, less capable of compendious statement, might be cited: but these will sufficiently illustrate the strange metamorphoses which this philosophical divining-rod can produce.

We have not space to render any account of M. Coquerel's Scriptural exegesis. Occasionally, we meet with very sound and sensible critical expositions; as of the Proem of John (p. 166); of 1 Tim. iii. 16 (p. 170); of Heb. v. 7 (p. 178); of the passages containing the word Sheôl (p. 117). But, in general, his style of interpretation appears to us too fanciful and ingenious; divesting the sacred writings of their distinctive hues of race and age, and throwing over them the pale light of modern philosophy. It is difficult to make the Hebrew warriors and prophets speak the language of M. Cousin. The time is past when a divine could put down the doctrine of *à priori* ideas, by quoting Job's dictum, "We brought nothing into this world:" and when we find our author refuting "Idealism," and proving the antithesis of Self and Not-self, by the text, "Ye fools, did not he that made *that which is without*, make *that which is within* also" (Luke xi. 40), we cannot but regret the encroachments of the metaphysician upon the province of the critic. On some important points,—especially on the leading principles of the Pauline theology,—we find ourselves in imperfect accordance with M. Coquerel: but the brevity of his notes, as well as the exhausted patience of our readers, will plead our excuse for passing these topics in silence.

In looking back upon our notice of this work, we feel conscious of having expressed a more copious dissent from the author, than our prevailing concurrence in his conclusions would seem to render natural. But the structure of

his book, which professes to be a logical whole, and the express claim in the Preface, that the iron chain of demonstration shall be tested and not the golden lustre which it supports, have left us no choice; and have unhappily precluded us from dwelling on several detached parts of the treatise to which we assent with hearty admiration. Had we been at liberty to treat the work, not as "a complete system of philosophy and of religion," but as a manifesto of Protestantism in France, measuring the line to which the Reformation had advanced in that country, we should have welcomed it with no words but those of sympathy. And we cannot refrain from closing our notice with a delightful paragraph, showing how comprehensive a charity is blended, in the author's mind, with a profound and thoughtful faith:—

"There lived in our country (France) a man who believed in the real presence, in the sacrifice of the mass, in the reign and worship of the Virgin, in works of supererogation, in treasures of indulgences, and in the power of absolution; he believed in the infallibility of the Pope so thoroughly, that perhaps the only trace of affectation observable in his life was the demonstrations of submission, publicly made, to a papal decision. Assuredly, according to the Protestant faith, this man was a very imperfect Christian, as respects his faith. He gave, however, examples of all the Christian virtues; he lived an eminently Christian life, opened his palace to all the wounded, friends or enemies, condemned all violence and persecution on the pretext of religion; he lived like an admirable Christian, in one of those periods when it was most difficult so to do;—his name was *Fénélon*. Does any one imagine that there are many Protestants at the present day who refuse to admit that Fenelon was eminently Christian in everything except his faith?

"In our own days there has lived a man in our country who believed the Papacy to be a scandalous usurpation of human dominion over the kingdom of God; who believed that the bread and wine used in the Lord's Supper are merely the common product of corn and the vine; that the sacrifice of the mass is the most prodigious of errors; that every priest who absolves, usurps the prerogative of God; that the Assumption

of the Virgin is a fable, and her worship a superstition ;—this man, by the uninterrupted devotedness of half a century, succeeded in rescuing from misery, ignorance, immorality, and irreligion, a whole *commune*, lost in a wild and pathless district of the Vosges. In order to succeed, he had recourse to the secret of St. Paul ; he became all things to all men ; he was at once pastor and schoolmaster, judge and arbitrator, farmer, mason, road-maker, and became even a printer, in order to diffuse the holy truths of Christianity ;—his name was *Oberlin*. According to the Catholic faith, it would not have been easy to have met with a Christian more imperfect in respect of faith. Does any one imagine that many Catholics could be found at the present day who would hesitate to proclaim, that in all other respects it would have been difficult to have found a better Christian than Oberlin ?

" To these illustrious examples, how many more humble ones might we add ! Who does not discover on his path of life, who does not remark among his circle of friends and relations, and often in his private family sphere, minds whose faith he condemns, and whose Christian virtues he admires ?

" In a word, who has not seen the holiness, the charity, the touching humility of the Gospel extending their sweet influence over the course of life, in spite of the superstitions and errors which have taken possession of the understanding ?"—(Pp. 389–391.)

V.

LETTER AND SPIRIT.*

THIS discourse was delivered before the ministers and delegates of the Congregational Union. The audience was choice; the subject, great; the preacher, eminent: and the hearer,—still more, the reader,—might reasonably expect a thoughtful contribution towards the settlement of a deep and intricate question. He will be disappointed. Should he already be in Dr. Vaughan's state of mind,—alarmed at the freedom with which the outward authority of Scripture is often treated, and startled by the tones of a Christian piety apart from the reputed essentials of Christian dogma,—he will find vigorous expression here given to his own disturbed feelings and offended attachments. Should he, on the other hand, be in any sympathy with Theodore Parker or Francis Newman, or even J. D. Morell, he will experience the peculiar style of cruel candour distinctive of pulpit polemics; being first mildly coaxed into the preacher's hands, and then sharply beaten. But should he be an earnest thinker, needing real guidance between these two directions, he will receive no help, unless he can extract it from this riddle, which contains the substance of the sermon,—that he must take *both* paths, and for that end never quit the preacher's *one*. "You must believe nothing against the spirit: you must believe everything according to

* "Letter and Spirit: a Discourse on Modern Philosophical Spiritualism, in its Relation to Christianity." By Robert Vaughan, D.D., London: 1849.—*Prospective Review*, May, 1850.

the letter: which may be easily done, by just accepting the letter as the rule for the spirit."

The object of Dr. Vaughan is to counteract the influence of the writers just named, by assailing a position common to them all, viz., that we are "to subject everything religion may be supposed to include, to the test of an intuitive susceptibility or power of the mind, which, quite apart from the ordinary lights of the understanding, is held to be our great denominator in respect to all religious truth, and all certainty in relation to it." This "dreamy theory" (the "Religion of the Spirit") he regards as an extravagant reaction against the "Religion of the Letter,"—the "superstition which looks more to documents, institutions, observances, than to any of those realities which are among the necessary elements of an inward and spiritual life." He undertakes to weigh the good and evil of both these opposite tendencies, and to find the point of equilibrium where they combine in a partnership of wisdom.

If Dr. Vaughan had fulfilled this promise; if he had adjusted the claims of the inward Soul and the outward Book; if he had shown how the one is to be the judge without ceasing to be the disciple of the other,—to impose on it conditions and yet be ruled by it as a law;—he would have relieved the religion of the age from one of its most oppressive embarrassments. The problem is in truth the ecclesiastical form of the great struggle between Idealism and Realism,—between the rights of subjective consciousness and those of objective tuition. As, in the doctrine of Perception, the question is raised, whether the mind spontaneously provides Space as a condition for apprehending Body, or from experience of Body learns the lessons of Space; as, in the logic of the natural Sciences, it is doubted whether our thought throws out the law of Causation upon phenomena, or gathers it from them; as, in ethical Philosophy, there is a controversy whether the sense of Obligation indigenously springs from reflection on our own acts, or is imported into us by observation of the acts of others:

—so, in Religion it is asked how far the native faiths of our purer mind are to bear authority, and how far we are dependent on the historical testimony of physical miracle, and the propositions of a verbal revelation. This last question cannot be discussed, any more than the others, without carrying the research pretty deep into the constitution of human nature, so as to determine the precise relation of the faculties to one another and of all to their outward opportunities. Whoever contends for intuitive apprehensions of divine truth supposes the mind spontaneously active; whoever denies them, conceives of it as merely receptive. He who never doubts a faith to be true which he feels to be holy, places his understanding at the disposal of moral sentiment and affection: while he who cannot own it as holy till witnesses have proved it to be true, postpones the suggestions of conscience to the intellectual estimate of probabilities. A different conception of the mind's action, and a different ranking of its several powers, evidently lie at the bases of these contrasted theories; and a discussion which does not sink to these foundations must remain without result; superficially exhibiting an antipathy which it cannot radically resolve. Our author's unconsciousness of this renders his whole treatment of his subject loose and unsatisfactory.

The very problem on which he is engaged is so unsteadily conceived as to fluctuate with almost every statement. The antithesis of "letter and spirit" is employed chiefly to contrast *intuitive* with *testimonial* authority in matters of religion; and the rivalry between these two *sources* or *antecedents* of faith is the main topic of discussion. But on one page (p. 1) "the letter" is defined to mean "the *truth* which our Lord taught," and "the spirit" to be "that condition of our spiritual nature which is the natural *result* of Christian truth." On another (p. 5) "the letter" becomes "the *Church system* to which a man has given his adhesion;" "the spirit,"—"the *character* he has realized." On a third (p. 6) the opposition lies between

"the *form* of godliness" and "the *power* of it." On a fourth (p. 10) "the state of a man's soul towards the object of religion" is given as the true definition of the word "spirit:" "this," we are told, "is *our Lord's meaning* in the text" (John vi. 63); yet is *not* "its strictly evangelical signification!" In short, the preacher's ideas, directed only by the metaphor of his text, visit irregularly anything to which that metaphor applies; contrasting now the Pharisee and the Mystic; and now opposing orthodoxy to deism. Habitually he employs the word "spirit" to denote the moral affections *produced by* faith; and not, as his argument requires, the moral affections *producing* it. A thesis thus inconstant forbids all durable result.

And even where the question under consideration is rightly presented, the *method* adopted for its determination can produce no conviction. Recourse is had exclusively to the argument of promise and threat: the reader is to be frightened or enticed into his conclusions by a picture of what must become of him, if he will not believe according to the approved pattern. "Beware how you trust to any moral and spiritual evidence, or you will find yourself a Deist! Let nothing slip from the authenticity and infallibility of Scripture, or your Christianity is gone!" It may be so: but how does this help me to any new light, or resolve any devout scruple? As well, and with injury scarcely more coarse, might you urge: "Take heed how you believe about the Atonement, or you will lose your salary! Think discreetly on the matter of religious education, or your party will disown you!" The sanctified and conscious effrontery with which the Tractarians have pressed this meanest of arguments can surprise no one who knows the contempt with which they regard human nature, and their despair of attaining objective truth. But such a weapon is too vulgar for such a hand as Dr. Vaughan's; and we are astonished that he condescends to touch it. Is our faith then without positive grounds, that we must be hunted into it as a mere refuge from worse evils? Are

there no first truths in religion, to which our schemes may be referred for legitimation, and our errors for detection? Or are we to determine our position by shrinking and avoidance, to believe by repulsion, to worship by fear? We confess to an abhorrence,—instinctive or otherwise,—of this argument from consequences: we believe the resort to it to be an infallible mark of a sceptical age: and no conservative airs can beguile us from the persuasion that, where it is used, the orthodoxy which it defends has become an empty habitude, and the root of genuine faith been cut. Whoever applies to us such an instrument of conversion not only fails to convince us, but makes us aware that he is unconvinced himself. This may easily be without any moral insincerity. The stages through which an age or an individual mind passes in a change of faith are gradual, and many of them unconscious of their tendency; and the appeal to consequences, so habitual in the present day, is one of the last struggles of a yet possible sincerity.

This impression is not removed, when we attempt to define from this Discourse Dr. Vaughan's own theological position, in relation to the question of internal and external authority in religion. He appears to us not to know clearly where he stands; but to say and unsay, to concede and retract; to attack opponents for propositions indistinguishable from his own; and applaud doctrines at variance with the data he supplies. For instance, he says,—

"We readily admit that there are certain religious ideas and sentiments that may be said to be common to the race, and that will perish only as man shall perish. These ideas, and the impulses natural to them, have their place at the root of all religion. . . . In a word, it is not more clear that man was born to see the light and breathe the air, than that he was born to be religious. But if this be true, it cannot belong to revealed religion to contravene these tendencies, or to act independently of them. It may be a part of its office to correct and elevate

them, but it must be itself in substantial agreement with them, ——must, in fact, be founded upon them. We go one step further, as consequent on this admission. It is not enough that documents, regarded as containing a revelation, should be to all appearance genuine; the contents of the supposed revelation must not be at variance with the moral nature of man, rightly interpreted, nor with the known facts of the divine government. This distinction between the external and the internal proofs of Christianity is old as the literature of Christian evidence; and we are not disposed to attempt any vindication of the language employed by some eminent orthodox disputants in which they seem wholly to overlook this fact. It is not true, in our humble judgment, that the authority of the documents being once settled, in so far as the moral evidence derivable from history may be expected to settle it, we have henceforth nothing to do but to receive the contents of the documents unhesitatingly, however much at issue they may seem to be with what may be known of the Divine nature through other channels, or with what we feel to be the unalterable laws of our own nature. On the contrary, we have to do, as responsible agents, with the matter of which a supposed revelation may consist, as certainly as with the evidence by which it may be attested."—Pp. 10–12.

Now if this concession means anything, it surely allows that the moral sentiments are to be used upon the contents of a supposed revelation, in the same way as the understanding upon the sources of its documents; and that as the latter is competent to test the extrinsic evidence, the former is no less "certainly" competent to test the intrinsic spiritual truth. We have something else to do,—it is acknowledged,—than "to receive the contents of the documents unhesitatingly. *What* else then, unless to *judge* of the contents, by criteria treasured in our own highest reason and affections? If, in spite of their credentials, we are *not* to take them on trust, how can we proceed a step further but under the guidance of our own religious sentiment? Is not that sentiment then a "test of truth or falsehood in a religion?" Yet a few pages later Dr. Vaughan says,—

"The evidence which should establish a religious authority

of any kind or degree in a *book*, must of course be fatal to the absolute authority claimed for religious sentiment in the *mind*. Hence the tendency of this whole school to depreciate all the forms of 'historical proof,' in relation to this subject. Hence their solicitude to draw the Christian away from this ground,—to bring him to admit that the proper test of the truth or falsehood of a religion lies, after all, not in anything historical, outward, or written, but in the sentiment of the mind,—in the conviction and feeling of man's moral nature. The Christian being once so far seduced as to make this concession, resting his argument on half the basis proper to it in place of the whole, all that is distinctive of Christianity is then readily explained away, and the residuum is a philosophical deism under a Christian name. The pride of our pseudo-spiritualism cannot brook a rival. Man must have all his needed resources from himself. He must be equal to his own destiny. The word *within* him must be the only *living* word, the word *without* him must be the *dead letter*."—P. 20.

We submit that our author has himself made the very concession which he here denounces. He granted to "religious sentiment" the "authority" he is now so eager to withdraw. It is vain to plead that its authority was not to be "absolute," or to supersede its "rival." There *is* no rivalry, and can be none, between historical criticism as to the age of books, and moral intuition as to internal sanctity of sentiments. The object-matters to which they apply themselves as criteria are perfectly distinct; and each power is independent, within its proper sphere, of interference from the other. We cannot, on the one hand, decide by moral sentiment whether Matthew's gospel was written in Hebrew; or, on the other, prove by the testimony of ancient heretics and fathers, that "the pure in heart shall see God." The two kinds of evidence, our author does not deny, must *concur*, in order to prove a Divine revelation. Each therefore has a *veto* upon the assertion of a revelation, and suffices to exclude it; though neither by itself is adequate to establish it. This is all that is meant when "historical proof" is depreciated in relation

to Christianity. It is an apparatus that results in nothing, unless the seal and suffrage of the soul be added to the faith it recommends.

The right which Dr. Vaughan claims for the human mind, to judge of the contents of a proffered revelation, we are also unable to reconcile with his doctrine of scriptural infallibility. "The idea of a revelation to be contained in a book includes," he observes, "the idea of inspiration, *that the truth recorded may be pure truth.*" By what process of evidence does our author ascertain the presence of this unerring inspiration? Does he take it on trust, *before* estimating the teachings thus conveyed? Then what becomes of the trial to which, "as a responsible agent," he is bound to submit "the matter of the supposed revelation?" Or does he accept it not till *after* this trial has been completed, and all the contents have proved satisfactory? Then does he believe the Scriptures inspired because they are true, instead of owning them true because they are inspired. If the truth be a condition of the inspiration, all is granted that the "spiritualist" asks: if the inspiration is to be security for the truth, the contents must be taken on trust, and less is granted than Dr. Vaughan himself demands. Our author professes to be shocked that men should find in the Scriptures any inconclusive reasoning, or regard any of their various writers as capable of error. But of what service is the permission to judge of the matter of a book, if the verdict is to be thus bespoken, and we are forbidden to see anything imperfect?

"It is too commonly maintained, not only that we should regard the language, the whole literary character, and the natural science of the Bible as of purely human origin, but that even in respect to moral and religious matters, the sacred writers should not be viewed as secure from misconception—from degrees of error. On the contrary, it is said to be manifest that these writers could reason illogically, could fall into mistakes and differences about religious things, and were by no means superior to the current prejudices of their times. The

best of them, accordingly, is to be received as being no more than substantially trustworthy.

"Now let the authority of the Scriptures be once reduced to an affair of this defective and fragmentary kind, and of course that authority ceases to have any real existence. If the sacred writers may reason badly, and err even in respect to religious things, it is natural to ask—how am I to distinguish between the sound and the unsound in their reasonings, between the truth and the untruth in their statements? In this case, it must be obvious, the only authority left to settle these questions is our own mind;—what to receive, what to reject, must be determined simply by our own sense of fitness. This sense of fitness, accordingly, comes to be our revelation;—we have not, cannot have, any other. Each man becomes a Bible to himself, and the Bible external to himself possesses no more authority than the Bible within him may be prepared to cede to it;—that is, it possesses no real authority at all. Such is the natural history of our modern spiritualism."—P. 22.

Are we then to understand that our author,—in order that the authority of the Scriptures may not become defective and fragmentary,—does not choose to see any difference between St. Matthew and St. John, any Hebrew prejudice in St. Peter, any temporary logic in St. Paul? or, that having studied these writings freely as a literature, he can discover, by the critic's ordinary tests, no trace of any such human features; and therefore holds them of infallible authority? Is he then prepared to stake the existence of revelation on this issue? and if he should meet, in the epistle to the Galatians, with a questionable argument, or find the Thessalonians instructed in a mistaken hope, or read in Luke a prophecy of Christ's return within the limits of that generation, will he throw his Christianity away? Does Dr. Vaughan think that believers in demoniacal possession were altogether "superior to the current prejudices of their times?" Or will he avail himself of the saving clause by which he escapes the responsibilities of precise statement, and say, that errors of this kind are not "*about religious things?*" The evangelist who

declares "the devils knew that he was Messiah," and who supposed himself to be thus adducing a supernatural testimony to the divine office of his Lord, would have been surprised to learn that this was no "religious thing." The apostle whose eye was fixed upon the near παρουσία, and who found his joy and crown in the theocratic prospect, would hardly have consented to degrade this faith into a mere secular hope. Wherever this idle distinction is drawn, it is invented for the mere purpose of evasion. Everything in the Bible has always been regarded, by its mere presence there, as *being religious*, until criticism has fastened on it some doubt: but as soon as it becomes incredible, it is suddenly discovered to have no relation to religion. To those who disbelieve it, it has none; but to its believers it was sacred as the doctrines that still remain. This shifting line is as purely subjective as the "sense of fitness" which, on that ground, our author charges with incompetence; and is just as certain to surrender successive ingredients of Scripture, till each mind and each age "becomes a Bible to itself." Dr. Vaughan asks: "How am I to distinguish between the sound and the unsound in *the reasonings* of the sacred writers?" We can only do it, he replies, by the exercise of our own minds: and *that* he prohibits as an infidelity. It follows that we must not do it at all, but *take the whole reasoning on trust* and ask no questions. This, however, implies that we are forbidden to *understand* the reasoning which Scripture may spread before us. For no man can understand *an argument* without either feeling its force or failing to feel it; the successive propositions might possibly be taken on trust; but their logical sequence cannot be owned without being felt; nor can their logical inconsequence be suppressed from the intellectual consciousness by any act of will. What, then, would our author recommend as the fit attitude of mind for the study of an apostolic argument? We had always supposed that whoever *reasons* with us appeals, by the very act, to our understanding, and invites a judgment on what he says

But if we are forbidden to draw distinctions between the sound and the unsound, the reasoning is a mockery, and the appeal a snare. The very existence of ratiocination in the Scriptures is at variance with their plenary inspiration and their use as infallible oracles: and when once the least infringement is allowed upon that plenitude of authority, there are nothing but degrees between Dr. Vaughan and his most obnoxious opponents.

The appeal to the evidence of our moral and spiritual nature in matters of religion is egregiously misrepresented when described by our author as yielding the following rule: "*We are to receive Christianity as from God, in the measure in which we see that it* MIGHT *have come from man, and* ONLY *in that measure*" (p. 17). Truth which touches the conscience and finds our highest nature, is not made human,—does not cease to be divine,—by simply entering our consciousness. It does not follow that, because we can recognize its worth when presented, we could originate it, if it were not. As well might you say, that because we can see the sunshine, we could make it: and that, since we are insensible to it till it falls upon our sphere and visits our eye, "*We receive it as from Heaven, in the measure in which we perceive that it* MIGHT *have come from Earth, and* ONLY *in that measure.*" Dr. Vaughan, as often in the windings of this Discourse, supplies the proper answer and the just rebuke to himself, when he says, "The capacity to see the reasonableness of a truth when revealed, is confounded with the capacity to discover that truth without the aid of a revelation. The distinction here is so obvious that no philosopher should be pardoned for overlooking it."

With these few criticisms we quit this little volume; not attempting, with so slight a basis, to lay out systematically the great subject of which it treats. With some of the writers to whom he refers we have no sympathy of faith; with others, only a very qualified accordance: but we think they all deserved a better answer. Had the matter of this Discourse been of a higher order, the manner would pro-

bably have been less assuming and the style more restrained within the limits of good taste. The preacher's undeniable vigour degenerates continually into harshness and browbeating, and impresses his readers more with the strength of his antipathies than with the depth of his convictions. Dr. Vaughan is an accomplished man; but he wins our admiration more as an historian than as a polemic.

VI.

EUROPE SINCE THE REFORMATION.*

THE first half of this volume treats almost exclusively of the theological movement commenced at Oxford in 1833, in which the Author played so conspicuous a part. Through seven consecutive Lectures, he addresses himself entirely to the peculiar feelings and convictions of those who had been his partners or followers in that extraordinary reaction against the doctrines of the Reformation. With relentless force and penetrating subtlety of argument, he drives them from every position short of that which he himself has assumed; and conclusively shows that, except within the Papal Church, their principles can find no scope or recognition, and must be doomed to perpetual feebleness and contempt. The reasoning of the Lecturer is so cogent, and at the same time so obvious and direct, that the wonder is, how it should have remained inoperative on so acute a mind for a dozen or fifteen years: and when we remember that during the whole of that time the very considerations by which he now presses so hard upon his old companions were constantly urged upon himself from both Romish and Evangelical critics of the "Tracts," we think he might have spared a little of the sarcasm which he scatters on his "dear brethren," and softened the arrogant tone of triumph with

* "Lectures on certain Difficulties felt by Anglicans in submitting to the Catholic Church." By John Henry Newman, Priest of the Oratory of St. Philip Neri. Second Edition. London, 1850.—*Prospective Review*, February, 1851.

something of the humbler voice of sympathy. On this part of his volume, however, it is not our intention to comment. We think that it establishes his case in the most complete and unanswerable manner; while the delicate irony, the rich illustration, the scholarly style, everywhere enliven and adorn the argument as it proceeds. But the controversy between Oxford and Rome is after all a mere provincial affair, more and more lost in vaster interests upon which its narrow course has drifted us. It is a happy result of the present ecclesiastical dissensions,—a result which may be set off against the obvious evils of an angry crisis,—that controversy is obliged to enlarge its operations and widen its field: it no longer lies between sect and sect of Protestants; or between the select aristocracy of Romish doctrines approved at Exeter and the plebeian remnant contemptuously left as the *peculium* of the Vatican; but engages all the forces of a sacerdotal Christendom against the subjective and spiritual gospel of the Reformation. It embraces the whole historical question as to the merits of the last three centuries compared with the thirteen or fourteen preceding ones; and compels thoughtful men to look back to the days of Tetzel and Cajetan, and compute what we have gained. In the latter half of his volume our author enters upon this difficult ground. In the eighth and ninth lectures, he discusses the present condition of the old Catholic countries; and maintains that there is nothing in their political and social state, as compared with Protestant lands, which can justly be thought to prejudice the sanctity or weaken the claims of the Romish Church. His treatment of this topic is in curious contrast with his management of the narrower argument against the Anglicans. We miss the direct and forcible statement, the stringent logic, the triumphant exhibition of hopeless dilemmas; and we meet instead,—as if to cover the sophistical evasion of all reasoning,—with a series of animated pictures and eloquent invectives; our admiration of which is saddened by the impression that the author, master alike of dialectic

and of rhetoric, uses the one or abuses the other for any end of persuasion he may desire to serve. We propose first to state, with greater fulness than was suited to his purpose, the objection which he professes to discuss; and then to estimate his success in getting rid of it.

It is a welcome relief when a theologian will at all consent, like our author, to quit the literature of polemical divinity, and appeal, for the settlement of doubts, to ecclesiastical and social phenomena visible to the common eye. It is a wholesome check to false or partial reasonings, to adjourn our controversies from books to life; to correct our dogmatic preferences by the verification of history; and follow the creeds from the wrangling of councils to the silent arbitration of fact and the world. No doubt, the intrinsic truth of a belief, the adequacy of the evidence on which it rests, must always constitute the first object of inquiry respecting it; and if this be well established, its authority over us is complete, without appeal to any external experience. But few minds are calm and capacious enough to embrace and estimate all the conditions of such a problem; and the majority of men feel, that a religion in theory is like a political constitution on paper,—consistently adapted perhaps to some supposable world, but of uncertain operation when thrown among the passions and preconceptions of a particular time and place. Human faith must be judged less as a philosophy than as a life; and must call nations as well as arguments in witness of its claims. The Historian, who knows what a system has *done*, is often a better critic of its worth than the divine, who thinks only of what it *is*: and a journey through Europe may teach a better theology than a life spent in the study of the Fathers.

There is great difficulty however in this task of weighing religions by their social fruits. It lays a careless imagination open to a thousand delusions. On the one hand we are tempted to ask for results which we have no title to expect; on the other, beguiled by fancy, to accept a false

standard of excellence. At one time, we leave momentous facts unnoticed in the dark: at another we read them by a coloured light. An ancient church, like the Roman Catholic, possesses vast resources for dazzling and fascinating the observer, and throwing dignity around its conceptions, and romance about its usages. Before the venerable aspect of tradition, young thought stands abashed; and beneath its warm breath the coldness of criticism melts away. No faith can live a thousand years without gathering around it a glorified cloud of witnesses, without passing through noble periods and sharing in grand exploits. Whatever is most affecting in the struggles of its early days will be embodied in its rites: whatever is most august in its hour of triumph will be heard in its tones: whatever is most heroic or saintly in the characters it has formed, will be represented in its legends. In the course of so long a time it must have come into comparison, perhaps into rivalry, with much that is inferior to itself, and appear resplendent by the contrast. And when all these effects are worked up by a skilful polemic, or gathered together by the affinities of a generous imagination, they may easily produce an impression more powerful than just. In applying to a system the test of experience, our judgment is not positive, founded on any balance of merits and demerits derived from the study of it, in and by itself; but is altogether comparative, resulting from a parallel drawn by the mind between the system which we are weighing, and some other of which we think. On the standard which we, perhaps unconsciously, adopt, will depend the conclusion at which we openly arrive; and, by cleverly managing the points of comparison, by engaging us wholly on contrasts selected for special effects, an adroit controversialist may wield the simple at his will. All the moral judgments of men are thus *preferential;* and one half of the discussions which they occasion would be readily brought to an end, if the suppressed term of comparison in the minds of the disputants were openly stated

and mutually understood. Now the Roman Catholic Church is the oldest organization in the Western world. The language of her services belongs to a people of which only ancient history tells. She heard the first lisp of every modern tongue; and had then already lived in Italy, as long as the Mars-born State from Romulus to the Cæsars. She saw the elements break up, into which the old civilization dissolved; and the incipient movements which have consolidated the new. She reviewed on their appearance the last classical productions of Latin and Greek literature, and remembered them when she heard the first minstrelsy of Castile and Provence. She knew Constantinople while it was yet Byzantium; and was a living observer still when it sunk into Stamboul by the baptism of the infidel. At the birth of the Eastern Empire, and at the death of both, the murmur of her prayers was heard. Her eye watched the Arab cloud that moved on from Mecca and the East; saw it sweep over the cities of Africa and wept for the desolation of her children; beheld it cross, the provinces of Spain, and finally break against the rock of Frankish valour. At the discovery of the new world she was ready to enter on that great field of spiritual conquest: on the revival of letters, to guide the fresh spirit by her counsels; on the invention of printing, to make the young power multiply her voice; on the re-birth of Art, to consecrate it to her service and adornment. Neither lengthening duration nor widening extent has scattered her forces, or weakened her combination; and the two hundred millions of souls of which she now boasts as under her guardianship, are more closely bound to her sway, more promptly obedient to her will, than at any former period of her existence. An institution thus vast and ancient, cannot but be rich in comparisons favourable to its character. For ages the whole power of Christianity had no other shrine. When from the military and judicial organization of the Roman empire, which coerced into artificial citizenship races using no common speech and animated by no

common sentiment, we turn to the moral unity established by the Church, it is a sublime thing to see the persistence of one Christendom amid the shifting of tribes, the chaos of law, and the struggles of force; and to own that amid elements of infinite confusion, a spiritual power has achieved a task which the energies of the republic, the weight of the empire, the virtues of a Trajan, the armies of a Diocletian, could not accomplish. Other faiths have created intense and vigorous nationality:—in Judæa, in Egypt, and among the Hellenic race, the ties of a common origin, and the heritage of one tradition, have produced distinct types of character and a separate life in history. But in these instances, lineage, language, religion, blended all their powers into one; and never, till the Church arose, did the unaided sympathies of faith undertake the conquest alone, triumph over diversities of speech and antipathies of race, and form an incorporation combining the stringency of Hebrew enthusiasm with the flexibility of a cosmopolite philosophy. Nor is the contrast less striking between the prophet of Mecca and the pontiff of Rome; while the comparison is more natural, inasmuch as both stand at the head of a professed theocracy. At the moment of its origin, the Arab faith was perhaps purer and more noble than the corrupt scheme which usurped the name of Christianity: to dissipate the dreary inanities of Greek and Oriental superstition, the world needed a proclamation, at any cost, of the Eternal Monarchy of God; and Islam burst into existence, to be the witness to that threatened truth. But the zeal that is kindled by a solitary truth is like a force arising from disturbance of equilibrium, fierce and evanescent; compared with the agency of a comprehensive and balanced faith, it is as the fury of the wind contrasted with the nourishing presence of the atmosphere. The tempest of Mohammedanism subsided, while the repose of Catholicism remained: and now that it has passed, it is clear that the Arabian faith could take up none but the second-class nations of the world; that it gives an

inspiration which Paganism cannot resist, but Christendom need not fear; that it lights up into energy at the provocation of the one, and wastes away by the contact of the other; and that, while younger by centuries than the Church, it is gone into decrepitude, while its rival's step is yet fresh upon the earth. Proudly then may the Vatican point us to the ruins of the Capitol, the desolation of Jerusalem, the wastes of Arabia, and the monuments of the Alhambra, and say, "All these, in their scorn and splendour, reproached me once, but I have seen them pass away: the blessing of men is no longer upon them, and the will of heaven is written on their remains: let my bitterest foe declare whether there is one he could wish back in exchange for me." But this is not the appeal by which the pretensions of Rome are to be tried: though it is that which her skilful polemics are always urging on our notice. We allow her all her mediæval and ante-mediæval glories, when her cause was that of Christianity itself against inferior powers. A higher term of comparison has been present for the last three centuries: with this alone we have to do. We close the book of earlier history: we quit the countries of the unbaptized: we keep to the field where Protestantism has run its career in the presence or the vicinity of the older faith; and by the social and moral condition of similar nations abandoned to the rival religions, we may estimate the worth and quality of their respective influence.

The result of this comparison is so striking and wonderful that no Catholic can deny it, and no Protestant account for it. It is notoriously true that every European country which during the last three centuries has vindicated a higher place in the great family of states, and advanced towards the first rank in industry, intelligence and power, is either Protestant, or largely affected by Protestant influence; while all those which are either stationary or retrograde, are Catholic. This would be easily explained if the reformation had taught, as some erroneously imagine, the principles of civil or religious liberty; if it had embodied any generous

political doctrine; if it had conceded the right of private judgment, and discarded the pretence at dogmatic unity; if it had looked with a more kindly eye upon the interests of this world, and studied the arts and knowledge on which their administration depends. But none of these things are true. It accepted the alliance of princes more readily than of peoples; and appeared as often on the side of repression as on that of democracy. It seized hold of monarchies which remain absolute to this day; and on republics which had been as free before. It retained the penal practices against heresy, and allowed that every schism should be punished but its own. It handed over to the magistrate the dominion over thought which it had wrested from the priest. And on the arts and elegances of life, the appliances of wealth, the pursuits of secular knowledge, on all that makes the splendour and glory of the world, no ascetic could look with a severer eye. Apparently indifferent to all these things, it has yet brought them all to the highest perfection which they thus far exhibit. Absolutism prevails in both Prussia and Austria; the Protestant kingdom has inherited nothing from antiquity, and from the hand of nature received the bleakest desert of Western Europe: the Catholic empire is heir to the titles of Charlemagne, and is a collection of rich and various provinces, filled with all the diversities of genius and valour that can be nurtured on the plains of the Danube and in the recesses of the Alps, or cluster round the shores of the Adriatic. Yet compare the two countries in administration, in finance, in productive industry, in popular education, in the just fame of their universities, in the activity and affluence of their press; and in all that constitutes the higher life of a nation, the Northern state has immeasurably outstripped the Southern. Or take an example from the opposite political extremity: the Swiss Cantons of Berne and Vallais are both republics, and to cross from the one to the other is but a morning's walk. That the mountains which divide them are the boundary of

two religions as well as of two states, you may read on the very face of the fences and the fields, before you enter a village and speak to an inhabitant. The decent and substantial order, the cleanness of culture, the thoroughness of work, the compactness of structure, the wholesome self-respect of the people, in the one commonwealth, are exchanged in the other for the slovenly and chaffy look, the unmended buildings, the noisome streets, the tawdry dress, the constant beggary, the profuse civility of speech, the good humour so loosely hung, which mark the catholic stage of civilization. Do you say, that, in spite of similar institutions, the difference is explained by physical disadvantages and some contrast of employment? Compare then two countries at the opposite extremities of Europe, both of them devoted, in about the same proportions, to the same occupations, of agriculture, mining and fisheries. When Sweden was lying unknown in hyperborean darkness, Sicily was the ornament of the Mediterranean, and the granary of the Tiber; the favourite of Phœnicia, who coveted nothing that was poor; the envy of Greece, who admired only what was beautiful; the rich prize contended for between Carthage and Rome, who made no mistake about the elements of power. From the warm bays of its sea to the summits of its mountain range, it presents a compendium of latitudes and bears the products of every clime. Nowhere does nature yield a more grateful return; no where has the industry of man left monuments of more splendid example. Yet, but for wild fruits, not two-thirds of the diminished population could live on the present produce of the soil. The grain, the fleece, the fruits, the animals, are all degenerate: the olive-trees were planted by Saracenic hands; and man appears as though retained in Paradise to exhibit the better the utmost misery of the fall. Large cities, not a century old, lie deserted and in ruins on the land. Amid a swarm of fifteen thousand monks, and with priests in every village, the people are in the grossest state of ignorance and neglect. Sweden, under the bene-

diction of no sunny sky, and with the invitation of no mellow land, exports largely from the produce of her soil: notwithstanding the temptations and the vices of a wintry clime, her industry is constantly progressive, and encroaches more and more on the forest, the beach, and the morass: and though schools are not carried into the recesses where the mountain hamlets lie, such is the spontaneous zeal for education, that even of the Lapland race there is not one in a thousand that is unable to read. Whoever would complete the round by contrasting the state of commerce and manufactures under the opposite influences, may place England and Holland by the side of Spain and Italy. Of all the courts in Europe, the Hague is probably that in which priests have least to do: the Vatican certainly is that in which they have the most. While Amsterdam is a hive of industry, Rome is a nest of lazy pauperism. In the one country they keep out the sea: in the other they rather die than drain the land. While the foggy Gelderland is brilliant with verdure or loaded with grain, the prolific Campagna is a desert. In the one, the people live by thrift, in the other by a mixture of mendicancy and plunder. On the shores of Zuider Zee it is their pride to make the leanest of kine fat: on those of the Adriatic the wild animals are exterminating the tame. In the secular state, the population are sedulously raised above the degradation of ignorance: in the ecclesiastical, they are protected against the dangers of knowledge. What stronger practical proof can be imagined than these comparisons afford, of the tendencies of sacerdotalism? By what evidence could it be more thoroughly convicted of depraving the characters of men, and disqualifying them for the offices of civil society? For, be it observed, the induction of instances is complete. Shuffle the nations as you will, no contrast can be produced which yields an opposite result. Belgium indeed affords a favourite topic of Catholic appeal; and has been recently adduced by Cardinal Wiseman as a happy model for English admiration; in which, amid a people of Romish faith,

entire religious liberty is allowed, education is provided for, and the produce of the field and the mill can vie with those of Norfolk and Yorkshire. We are not anxious to weaken the force of this example, and rejoice if a country so reasonably governed is really an object of archiepiscopal admiration. But a case so exceptional must spring from some exceptional cause. And who can forget how the Netherlands was one of the strongest early seats of the Protestant faith; how the English artisans and rich manufacturers of Flanders, under favour of municipal freedom, had eagerly opened their gates to the reformers; how iconoclast bands had roamed over the land, and borne fierce witness that even the rude peasantry had caught the flame; how the cold-blooded treachery of Philip the Second, and the atrocities of the Duke of Alva, had driven even the Catholic governors and nobles into rebellion; how the Inquisition, by perpetrating eighteen thousand judicial murders in five years, had united all good men of both faiths in detestation of religious persecution, and taught them to bear with one another and live side by side. That dreadful conflict with the priestly tyranny of Spain contains the distinctive glories of Flemish history. Thanks to the madness of oppression, the legends of every city secure it by hereditary pride to the interests of a just liberty; and the name of every hero like Egmont is an irrevocable pledge of toleration. In a population enclosed between the republican polemics of France and the Calvinistic religion of Holland, ruled by a Protestant King, and sustained in independence by Protestant alliance, there is no room for the development of ultramontane tendencies. The Past and the Present alike bind it down to the policy of the secular, rather than of the priestly government.

Now these contrasts are the more impressive, because their chronological boundary is just as clear as their geographical. They have all arisen since the sixteenth century. The countries now of foremost rank were then insignificant

or politically unknown; while the Catholic land of the South had held whatever was great and dignified in history. Of what weight was our own country in the councils of Europe during the wars of the roses? Where was Denmark, where Holland, where Prussia, before the voice of Luther broke the repose of the Empire and the Church? It cannot be said that they owe their relative rise and growth to causes unconnected with religion, such as the opening of new regions in the Western world. It was a subject of the Court of Madrid that broke the mystery of the Atlantic: it was Cortez the Spaniard who told his monarch that "he had gained him more provinces than his father had left him towns:" it was from Lisbon that the arm was stretched forth which grasped the riches of Brazil; and the new colonial and maritime empire created by the enterprise of the fifteenth century, as well as the mineral wealth it poured upon the shores of Europe, fell chiefly to the lot of the still Catholic peninsula. The age of the Reformation found that favoured land in possession of every element of material civilization and political power; first upon the land, greatest on the sea, and with young realms of boundless promise to refresh and perpetuate its glories in the new world. As if struck with mysterious blight, that early promise has withered, and now simultaneously droops on both sides of the Atlantic; while the British race, which gave welcome to the new religion, has succeeded to the commerce, and outstripped the empire of Spain in the East and in the West. Nor is this phenomenon confined to the mere material ingredients of political greatness. The inheritance of intellectual progress has been no less transferred, and by the very same rule, to new seats. Italy, which was the cradle of the renovated intellect of Europe, has for some time been its grave. The lively genius of her people has achieved what it could, under the incubus of pontifical oppression; and in the direction of Music, which reveals no secrets of the universe, and cannot contradict the Pope, and of historical

and antiquarian research, which keeps at a safe distance from the present, has never ceased to show that it is there, and only waits its time. But the fresh, original, enduring literature; the new arts; the scientific interpretation of nature; the philosophy distinctive of modern times; in what regions have they been indigenous? In Elizabethan England, in Lutheran Germany, in unbelieving France! Even the apparent exceptions do but prove the rule; the Jansenism of the Gallican church, so rich in the fruits of thought, owing its life to virtual revolt from Rome; and the romantic school of Schlegel being composed of converts trained in the freedom of Protestantism. The chief activity recently displayed by Rome in relation to letters, has been in prohibiting what living nations have created, and preserving its own frontiers as the sacred enclosure of apathy and death!

This transference of both political and intellectual empire from Catholic to Protestant countries is the more remarkable, because it is the result of no deliberate aim, and is the unforeseen, incidental consequence of an irresistible development. All the advantage of well-defined purpose, of matchless organization, of united will, of consistent theory, of practised skill in government, have been on the side of the old religion; which accordingly has succeeded in maintaining and even extending its ground, only at the cost of letting slip the noblest elements of our world. It has gained its own ends, but they are eclipsed by higher, in which it has no share. It has consolidated itself, by loosening and debasing everything else. Protestantism, on the other hand, impulsive, inconsistent, divided; possessed by a spirit which it did not understand; aiming at one thing and realizing another; resistless in attack, embarrassed in defence; ever proposing to persecute, yet obliged to liberate and redeem; scared by freedom, yet driven to be its foremost champion; sworn to orthodoxy, yet the parent of every heresy, has been the manifest instrument, in the hands of Providence, for the unconscious achieve-

ment of the sublimest ends. Like all the grandest and least perishable powers in this world, it has failed of its own objects, but accomplished better tasks of which it never dreamt. It has been ever loosening its own structure, but consolidating every society on which it acts. It has no self-knowledge; has always mistaken its own nature and place in history: but it has a true eye for reading, the true hand for using, the facts of human life and the administration of God. It is *veracious*, and puts its trust, not in a system, but in the truth. It has a conscience, which it disciplines to speak for itself, and will not part with to another, and so, with but guerilla forces both of men and thought, gathered from the untrodden mountains and retired homesteads of the earth, it defies the mighty legions which Rome has disciplined for ages; and in their very face, wrests kingdoms from their grasp, and calls up a new and more human world, with a diviner spirit to rule over it.

God therefore has pronounced that Sacerdotalism must cease to rule, and go out at the lower end of human life. This is the clear theme which his own voice of Reality passes along the courses of recent history; this, the illuminated legend which his finger writes on the crumbling surface of a decrepit civilization. From Bellarmine and Bossuet, from the subtleties of mediæval metaphysics and Tridentine divinity, the bewildered Protestant may securely appeal to this verdict of intelligible fact. So long as the Romanist advocate can detain his opponents among the controversies of the schools, he has many advantages over them which it would be uncandid to deny. He justly charges Protestants with inconsistency, in demanding soundness of faith, as a condition of grace, yet providing no check to the vagaries of private judgment. He accuses them of rejecting Transubstantiation, on the ground of its absurdity, yet retaining the Trinity, as if it were agreeable to reason. He convicts them of self-contradiction, in denying to human nature all free-will and capacity of rectitude, yet dooming to eternal penalty this race of mere

incapables. He reproaches them with their failure to create a church, their inability to bring their disputes to any settlement, their ever multiplying divisions, the unimpeded success among them of the extremest rationalism and the vilest superstition, and the apparent exhaustion already of all their resources for further progress. He asks them why they believe in the miracles of the first century, and not in those of the second; and admit the authority of the first four councils, yet deny the rest;—talk of the "holy Catholic Church," yet denounce as idolatrous the only communion which has any pretension to Catholicity. To these perplexities it is difficult to give any satisfactory reply. But a layman, with good sense and a fair knowledge of modern Europe, may turn the controversy with irresistible force into a different direction, by asking such practical questions as these:—Whether a Roman Catholic gentleman had rather own a thousand acres in England or in the Papal States? or a labourer earn his wages in the Campagna or the Lothians? or an intelligent schoolmaster preside at his desk in the Transteverine quarter, or in a Dublin National School? or a professor of philosophy occupy a chair at Bologna or at Berlin? The facts to which these questions point, can be spirited away by no logical legerdemain. They are the ineffaceable monuments which time has erected and inscribed to the reformers. If all the elements of civil life, and agencies of human culture, are found in their lowest stage where the priestly power is the highest; if property has less value, labour less reward, knowledge less encouragement, speech less freedom, there than *in partibus infidelium;* if there are more paupers, more thieves, more marauders; if there is little reverence for law, and no confidence in justice; it is impossible not to hold the religion which there has undisputed sway accountable for a social debasement neither due to that favoured land, nor shared by contemporary nations.

Nor does the Catholic advocate altogether refuse to accept this responsibility. At least, Father Newman in

addressing himself to this difficulty, neither ventures to deny the facts, nor hesitates to allow that they are constant accompaniments of the ascendency of the Church. In the name of Italy and Spain he is content to plead guilty to the charge of a low civilization, but in mitigation of sentence he puts in two pleas of defence: viz., first, that the Church is not responsible for the secular life of the countries where it prevails, having never undertaken to invent spinning-jennies, and build tubular bridges; and secondly, that the boasted civilization of Protestant countries is but an illusory good, certainly not worth its spiritual cost. The former of these apologies he presents in these forcible sentences:—

". . . . The question is this:—How is it, that at this time Catholic countries happen to be behind Protestants in civilization? In answer, I do not determine how far the fact is so, or what explanation there may be of the appearance of it; but any how the fact is surely no objection to Catholicism, unless Catholicism has professed, or ought to have professed, directly to promote mere civilization;—on the other hand, it has a work of its own, and this work, I have said or implied, is, first, *different* from that of the world; next, *difficult of attainment*, compared with that of the world; and lastly, *secret* from the world in its parts and consequences. If, then, Spain or Italy be deficient in secular progress, if the national mind in those countries be but partially formed, if it be unable to develop into civil institutions, if it have no moral instinct of deference to a policeman, if the national finances be in disorder, if the people be excitable and open to deception from political pretenders, if it know little or nothing of arts, sciences and literature;—I repeat I do not admit all this, except hypothetically; I think it an exaggeration;—then all I can say is, that it is not wonderful that civil institutions, which profess these objects, should succeed better than the Church, which does not. Not till the State is blamed for not making saints, may it fairly be laid to the fault of the Church that she cannot invent a steam-engine or construct a tariff. It is in truth merely because she has often done so much more than she professes, it is really in consequence of her very exuberance of benefit to the world,

that the world is disappointed that she does not display that exuberance always,—like some hangers-on of the great, who come at length to think they have a claim on their bounty."—*Lecture VIII.*, p. 200.

Never surely was there a more sophistical evasion of the point at issue than this. We demand why, in Catholic countries, the *State* does its work so much worse than in Protestant; and we are told in reply that the *Church* cannot pretend to perform the business of the State! Why, nobody asked her. In no land, be the clergy reformed or unreformed, do we expect railroads at the hands of Bishops, or cheap calico from the ecclesiastical courts: in England also, as in Spain, the curate is a person different from the constable, and has his own work, as special, as difficult, as much hidden in the heart, as that of any priest of the Oratory. The contrast between two nations cannot be explained by a circumstance common to both, viz., the separate spheres of operation assigned to the civil and the religious powers. The author treats Protestantism as if it were *all State*, Catholicism as if it were *all Church*; and then says, "it is not wonderful that civil institutions, which profess these (secular) objects, should succeed better than the Church, which does not." But are there no "civil institutions, which profess these objects," in Naples and Madrid? Does Vienna modestly disclaim all pretensions to govern, and possess no army, no paper money, no police, no prisons, no power of the sword? Are ships unknown in the Tagus, and was the printing-press never heard of at Venice? However sublime may be the sacerdotal indifference to these worldly things, we presume there are laymen in those places, to whom they are a care: the people do not entirely live on the consecrated wafer, without any need for clothes to their backs, a market for their produce, and the alphabetical characters for their children. Grant that the priesthood are quite pre-engaged in their own mission: we do not ask them to condescend to the contemplation of new tariffs, or the travelling by new locomotives: we only

would discover how it is, that, in their presence, the *State*, the worldly organization of the nation, which does "profess these things," accomplishes them so ill; creating laws which are not reverenced, magistrates who do not protect, taxes which swell the debt, schools that do not educate, and universities that mount guard against the approaches of knowledge. All the agencies and pretensions of civil rule and secular well-being exist in Catholic lands: that they are inefficient and corrupt, that they deceive the people by undertaking what they do not perform, is to be ascribed, not to the Church's fidelity to her mission, but to her intrusion into that which is *not her mission*. She *hinders* the work to which she affects a lofty disregard; and having poisoned the fountains of law, of morals, of instruction, looks mildly on the agonies of the perishing multitude, and says, her only business is to shrive the people when they die. The very excuse offered on her behalf is a direct confession, that civil institutions cannot co-exist with her, except as a mockery; that, only in Protestant countries can you reasonably expect to find them and their work; that, elsewhere, the priest's task must be so exclusively driven, as to paralyze the magistrate and absorb the State, and disentitle us to expect any of the fruits of civilization. This is but another way of presenting the politician's complaint, that a sacerdotal order never interposes to mend the affairs of this world; but reserves its interference till it can mar them.

Far more plausible, because striking our conscience with an element of painful truth, is the second line of defence resorted to by Father Newman: that in our Protestant civilization there is often but a showy and illusory good, purchased at too heavy a spiritual cost. The standard of good, it is said, recognized by the world, is not in accordance with that which is owned by the Church; and it may well happen that, in approaching it, we may be unconsciously receding from our real welfare. The mode in which this divergency actually takes place is thus described:—

"I may say the Church aims at three special virtues, which reconcile and unite the soul to its Maker;—faith, purity, and charity;—for two of which the world cares little or nothing. The world, on the other hand, puts in the first place, in some states of society, certain heroic qualities: in others, certain virtues of a political or mercantile character. In ruder ages it is personal courage, strength of purpose, magnanimity; in more civilized, honesty, fairness, honour, truth, and benevolence:—virtues, all of which, of course, the teaching of the Church comprehends, all of which she expects in their degree in all her consistent children, and all of which she exacts in their fulness in her saints: but which after all, most beautiful as they are, are really the fruit of nature as well as of grace; which do not necessarily imply grace at all; which do not reach so far as sanctity, or unite the soul by any supernatural process to the source of supernatural perfection and supernatural blessedness. Again, as I have already said, the Church contemplates virtue and vice in their first elements, as conceived and existing in thought, desire and will, and holds that the one or the other may be as complete and mature, without passing forth from the home of the secret heart, as if it had ranged forth in profession and in deed all over the earth. Thus, in a certain sense, she ignores bodies politic, and society, and temporal interests: whereas the world talks of religion being a matter of private concern, too personal, too sacred, for it to have any opinion about; it praises public men, if they are useful to itself, but simply ridicules inquiry into their motives, thinks it impertinent in others to attempt it, and out of taste in themselves to invite it. All public men it thinks pretty much the same at bottom; but what matter to it, if they do its work? It offers high pay, and it expects faithful service; but as to its agents, overseers, men of business, operatives, journeymen, figure-servants, and labourers, what they are personally, what their principles and aims, what their creed, what their conversation is, where they live, how they spend their leisure time, whither they are going, how they die,—I am stating a simple matter of fact, I am not here praising or blaming, I am but contrasting,—I say, all questions implying the existence of the soul, are as much beyond the circuit of the world's imagination, as they are intimately and primarily present to the apprehension of the Church."—*Lecture VIII.*, p. 204.

Yes, the concerns of the soul are present to the apprehension of the Church; but of the Protestant Church, no less than of the Catholic: they are disregarded by the world; but by the world in Austria as in England. This is no distinction between the South European and the North, but between the religious and the unreligious mind everywhere. With what right does the author thus insultingly identify all Protestant countries with the World, all Catholic with the Church? What reformed communion fails to watch, with vigilance equal to his own, over the three special virtues of "faith, purity, and charity"? What statesman, what merchant in Spain or Italy, concerns himself more than in Holland with the private creed and hidden aims of the agents he employs, provided he obtains faithful and efficient service? We do not say whether this is right or wrong; but only this, that as it is in Amsterdam or Bristol, so is it in Lisbon or Leghorn; and that the official and commercial morality is regulated by no higher principle, and insists no more on personal sanctity in Papal than in anti-Papal lands. To read the author's description, any body would suppose that in England the religious instructors were utterly careless about inward holiness, and were a kind of police for maintaining the decencies which covered a heart of corruption; that in private life, purity and devoutness of soul, shrinking from sin, self-scrutiny and prayer, were unknown; that there was a national understanding to estimate all persons by their usefulness as public machines, and let the tools be odious, if only they are profitable. Whereas if there is any country distinguished above another for the weight it attaches to *character*, for the contempt it feels towards those whose inward does not correspond to their outward man, for the wholesome sternness with which it guards the domestic sanctities, for the genuine depth of its moral reverence, we believe that nation to be our own. God knows we have sins enough to answer for; but when it is said that we have sacrificed the faith, purity, and charity,

so conspicuous in Rome and Naples, to the lust of gain or power, the accusation shows how fast the prejudices of the convert's creed may generate ingratitude to his country.

There is however a difference, strictly due to the two religions, between the conception of the State entertained in Protestant and in Catholic lands. The reformation trusts the individual to himself and his God; sweeps away the petty meddling of a ritual ever busy with his soul; delivers him from the ecclesiastical nursery in which he had been detained; and solemnly consigns him to his own best faith and love. Reflect only on the operation of a single change, the abolition of the confessional. So long as that usage continues, what is the work enjoined upon the conscience? Simply that of registering the moral facts of life, and faithfully reporting them: whoever has learned enough of the rules of right and wrong to read off the emotions of his heart and the actions of his hand, and know when he is tempted and when he falls, is qualified to present his tale at the sacerdotal ear. He appears there as a witness against himself; but, like the witness in a court, he has but to tell the truth; he has nothing to do with estimating the heinousness of the offence, and pronouncing on its fitting punishment: he only proves the case; the priest pronounces the verdict. Now, destroy the confessional, and what becomes of him? Entering his closet and shutting the door, he lays his burden before God. But God asks him no questions, and leads him on only by the silent eye of infinite purity; and so he has to search himself with the lonely lamp of that penetrating presence. And when he has breathed it all, and the sad story is spread there for judgment, no voice sums up with Jesuit casuistry: only the still night or morning lie pitying round, filled with the dear God looking speechless on, or merely whispering, in answer to every cry, "My sentence is written in thy heart, my mercy is hidden in thy love; go seek them there." Thus conscience springs at once from the humble bar of testimony to the august throne of justice, and is invested with prerogatives, without

which it will but serve the Church, instead of ruling and sanctifying life. The business of religion is no longer summed up in blind obedience. Duty reveals itself as something divine and awful, now that its spiritual part returns home, and is no more done by deputy. The natural result of such new discipline will be, that the moral sense will acquire a quickness of discernment, the will a clearness of decision, and the whole character a manly vigour, never known before: a childish light-heartedness will be replaced by grave earnestness; and to a volatile trust in others will succeed great energy of personal resolve. Hence the different stuff, the different moral material, of which Protestant and Catholic countries are composed; and hence the different functions which they respectively assign to the state. Where the new religion prevails, a much larger portion of life is surrendered freely to individual responsibilities; and men are left to govern themselves in a thousand cases, with which elsewhere public authority interferes. In the family, the public amusement, the school, the trade, the Church, the personal range of action is exempt from almost every interruption of law; and the presence of government is felt only negatively, by the exclusion of hindrances and injuries which might invade the province of private will. The consequence is, that the State has more and more given up the attempt to govern *men;* and, leaving them to their own guidance, has fixed its attention upon *things;* making rules about the transmission of property, the medium of exchange, the construction of roads, the conditions of commerce; but taking no notice of any *person*, unless he presents himself in the character of a violator of some of these and similar rules. He may poison himself with intoxication, drag down his wife into the agonies of despair, bring up his children as thieves, and spread fever and demoralization among his neighbours; yet prolong the course of his existence unquestioned for half a century. Unite this political feature with an immense industrial

development, with a mechanical power collecting labour into masses hard to organize, with an absorption of small capitals into large, with continual increase in the number of those who depend entirely on wages; and a nation in which these phenomena are combined will present many anxious problems and many unfavourable characteristics. The trust of uncontrolled personal responsibility, extended to classes without the education of property, or the influences of a decent home, will be abused, and produce only miserable fruits. As, in the eager competition of skill, these classes are accepted as labourers and neglected as human beings, counted as "hands" and forgotten as souls, it will be no unnatural reproach that *men* are only used as tools for the production of *things*; that the worth of a human life ranks below that of a steam-engine; that guilt and misery are no matter to us, provided we get our cloth; and that, in order to oppress the world with our wares, crowd the ocean with our ships, and stun the ear of night and day with our machinery, we are content that the house, the village, the city, should lose all wholesome order, and become lurking-places of every abomination. It is not surprising if those who compare the extremes of society in England, the princely luxury of the wealthy with the heart-rending privations of classes at once too obscure and too numerous to count, should accuse us of seeking to dazzle the eyes with the display of an aggregate wealth at a reckless cost of individual life and worth. Thus a system springing from reverence for the individual mind seems to end in its ruin; and the work begun in a spirit of generous trust threatens to issue in universal selfishness. On the other hand, we are assured that wherever the Catholic Church prevails, her presence, diffused among all ranks alike, secures a recognition of the infinite value of every soul; she cares for her children one by one; watches over them, not according to their outer appearance, but their inner wants; where temptation is strongest, brings the strongest help; where misery is deepest, breathes the

sweetest consolation; is never disgusted, never tired; neither corrupted nor terrified; but in the hovels of Naples, among the bandits of Calabria, in the prisons of Rome, constant to redeem from sin and prepare for heaven. The better to achieve her divine office and leave no part of it unfulfilled, the Church descends to the minutest division of spiritual labour: and a whole order is founded, devoted entirely to the single task of fitting the condemned criminal to die. The scene at the execution of a Roman felon, under the influence of this merciful fraternity, is thus strikingly pourtrayed by Father Newman:—

. . . . "When a culprit is to be executed, the night preceding the fatal day, two priests of the brotherhood, who sometimes happen to be Bishops or persons of high authority in the city, remain with him in prayer, attend him on the scaffold the next morning, and assist him through every step of the terrible ceremonial of which he is the subject. The blessed Sacrament is exposed in all the churches all over the city, that the faithful may assist a sinner about to make a compulsory appearance before his Judge. The crowd about the scaffold is occupied in but one thought, whether he has shown signs of contrition. Various reports are in circulation, that he is obdurate, that he has yielded, that he is obdurate still. The women cry out that it is impossible; Jesus and Mary will see to it; they will not believe that it is so; they are sure that he will submit himself to his God before he enters into His presence. However, it is perhaps confirmed that the unhappy man is still wrestling with his pride; and though he has that illumination of faith which a Catholic cannot but possess, yet he cannot bring himself to hate and abhor sins which, except in their awful consequences, are, as far as their enjoyment, gone from him for ever. He cannot taste again the pleasure of revenge or of forbidden indulgence, yet he cannot get himself to give it up, though the world is passing from him. The excitement of the crowd is at its height; an hour passes; the suspense is intolerable, when the news is brought of a change; that, before the crucifix, in the solitude of his cell, at length the not unhappy any longer, the happy criminal has subdued himself; has prayed with real self-abasement; has expressed, has felt, a charitable, a tender

thought towards those he has hated; has resigned himself lovingly to his destiny; has blessed the hand that smites him; has supplicated pardon; has confessed with all his heart, and placed himself at the disposal of his Priest, to make such amends as he can make in his last hour to God and man; has desired to submit here to indignity, to pain, to which he is not sentenced; has resigned himself to any length of purgatory hereafter, if thereby he may, through God's mercy, show his sincerity, and his desire of pardon and of gaining the lowest place in the kingdom of heaven. The news comes; it is communicated through the vast multitude all at once; and I have heard from those who have been present, never shall they forget the instantaneous shout of joy which burst forth from every tongue, and formed itself into one concordant Ave of thanksgiving, in acknowledgment of the grace vouchsafed to one so near eternity."—*Lecture VIII.*, p. 212.

This certainly is a picture which, placed by the side of a London execution, brings into strong relief the peculiar difference between Catholic and Protestant societies. The Catholic religion is so administered as to keep hold of the very lowest population, and have believers as complete among the hovels of the lazzaroni as in the cloisters of the convent. Ignorance and moral debasement, vices of sensuality, and crimes of blood, do not destroy the gift of faith: so that the acts of worship are seen, the names of the saints are heard, the trust in the "Mother of God" is felt, no less in the taverns and the jails than in the churches. The priesthood succeed in making the objects of devotion so real and vivid to the popular mind, that they take their place among the settled facts and fixed scenery of the universe: Heaven and Hell are as much a part of the Italian's geography as the Adriatic and the Appenines: the Queen of Heaven looks on the streets as clear as the morning star; and the souls in purgatory are more readily present to conception, than the political prisoners immured in the dungeons of Venice. Faith, in short, is independent of character, in the Romish creed;—a supernatural gift, infused at Baptism, and nourished by the Sacraments, but

capable of co-existing with any and every condition of affection and conscience: like the vision of the sunshine and the face of nature, open to the senses of the evil and the good, and fitted, by use or by abuse, to kindle the glow of a holy inspiration, or to light the pathway of mortal guilt. Protestantism, on the other hand, expels the unfaithful; will not consort with the habitually and impenitently wicked; treats the pretence of religion in those who are not even morally respectable as an odious hypocrisy, to be spurned from the altar as a vain oblation. She therefore lets slip entirely all who descend below a certain level of character; making indeed spasmodic efforts at their *conversion;* but, failing in this, turning away again, and shaking off at them the very dust of her feet; and furnished with no mid-refuge between salvation and perdition, within which they may be held on at some distance from utter ruin, and the last cords of hope remain unbroken and ready, in some happy moment, to be drawn in and bring them home. Thus it is undeniably true, that, in Protestant lands, the profligate and criminal population escape all Christian control, and become wholly irreligious; that even the simply poor, however worthy, are with difficulty retained in union with religious institutions: and that a certain grade of habit, a certain style of house, a particular type of culture, are almost indispensable conditions of Protestant discipleship. The Christianity of England ranges, accordingly, only over certain classes of society, while others lie in all the heartless neglect of heathenism.

Now we are far from denying the charge advanced against the modern civilization, that it neglects and crushes the weak, and, in the pride of material grandeur, loses the tenderness due to the human beings by whom the imposing structure is raised. We freely admit that cheap production of commodities is not the main end of civil society; and that if, in quest of this end, we have sacrificed any portion of human well-being which might have been preserved, have embittered the lot, increased the temptations, degraded

the children of any class, we are guilty, in our Mammon-worship, of apostacy from God. We fully believe that the theory of individual independence has been carried to a vicious extreme, and that the authority of the State must be extended over a wider range than the severity of economic doctrine has been willing to allow; concerning itself again with the houses, the hours, the education, the amusements of the people. But when the invectives against our type of civilization issue in praises of the Catholic populations, and in holding up their condition as the alternative, it is impossible not to feel a violent recoil. Granted that the lowest and most criminal classes of Italy are so far retained in the faith, as to swear by the saints, and invoke the virgin, and buy masses for the soul of a thief in purgatory: granted that they doff their caps at a crucifix, make farces at fairs out of Scripture incidents, and finish off their carnivals with a grand representation of the general judgment; the question arises, whether such a faith,—a faith without any root in thought or any blossom of good,—is of the slightest benefit; —whether it is even truer than the indignant unbelief which, by re-action, it provokes. What more shocking spectacle is there, than a people held fast by a religion, yet restrained by it from no debasement and excess; perfectly at home in it, yet contentedly abiding in deepest moral degradation; not living the better for it, but only brought by it to make a hollow and guilty peace with heaven, before they die. More just and reverential by far appears to us the Protestant feeling, that religion can in no form co-exist with habitual insult to laws human and divine; that unfaithfulness to conscience constitutes banishment from God; that the sinner's remnant of faith is turned from a blessing to a curse; and that to enlist under Satan, with God yet before the eye, is an apostacy impossible to even the extremity of guilt. What clearer testimony can there be to the sanctity of the reformed religion than this,—that it must be got rid of before men can surrender themselves to their temptations; that it is a clog on the career of evil, and while it

remains, acts only as a terror and restraint; that no one is qualified to enter the ranks of villany and license till he has unlearned its creed and scoffed at its authority? For our own part, we desire in our people no faith but one that comes and goes with the life of Conscience. Never let us be tempted to say, Since there must be wicked people in the world, it is as well to keep them on the Protestant side.

Let it be remembered also at what cost the ancient Church keeps hold of the ignorant and degraded. Is it not by losing the intellectual, the generous, the noble, in corresponding proportion? We own, indeed, the frequent alliance of genius and saintly virtues with the Catholic faith: and, did we not, the names of innumerable worthies would start from the calendar to rebuke us. But still it is undeniable, that in Italy itself, beneath the very shadow of the Vatican, all the interests of freedom, of morality, of patriotism, of knowledge, are arrayed *against* the religion there enthroned; that the educated class in all catholic countries are largely infected with utter unbelief; that for the extremest "rationalism,"—not the rationalism which has found *another* truth, but that which questions *all* truth,—we must look, not to sectaries of England, not to the Universities of Germany, but to the students, the gentry, the politicians, possibly even to the *priests*, of Italy and Spain. No portent can be more alarming than this. It will not be permanently possible to hold the populace, while alienating the classes who must rule and teach them. Divorced from the higher intellect and nobler aspirations of a people, no religion can long sustain its power; having its chief refuge among the *pagani*, it must pass into a Paganism. No, whatever form our future Christianity may assume, to recover the outcast and the perishing who throng its altars no more, it cannot be that of a spurious Catholicism, of which Science is ashamed, and from which Purity recoils; but of some church truly universal in which, while misery shall find an asylum and penitence a hope, Genius shall not be left without its inspiration, or any noble virtue without its work.

In spite therefore of our author's skilful use of every semblance of fault and failure in the development of society under the reformed faith, we feel an unshaken assurance that the current of civilization will not change the direction in which it has set for the last three centuries. We believe that priestly Christianity is smitten with inevitable decay. Its decline may have left some human wants unsupplied: and as time brings these into distinct consciousness, and intellectual panic gives them wider extension, some reaction in favour of the old system of authority is not unnatural. But it will take up only the weaker elements of society,—the minds that have never truly received the modern spirit, but, whatever the *name* of their worship, have always been dependent and sequacious, without much susceptibility of enthusiasm. The classes of persons, the types of character, the social interests distinctively created by the Reformation, constitute the living forces of the age; and these are quite outside the reactionary sphere. They will continue to command events, and to fix the conditions on which Popery shall remain a tenant on the world. In dynasties, in confederacies, in parties, there may be Restorations; but in Religions, none. In their higher spiritual relations, human affairs do not go back to the last thing, but take up the next; and new powers perish, only on the accession of newer. It is with a view to impart a firmer reliance on this truth, and to check, so far as in us lies, the unworthy consternation into which the Protestantism of England has recently been thrown, that we have endeavoured to fix our readers' attention on the balance of moral power in the world since the sixteenth century. We call the consternation "unworthy," because its apparent impulse is to seize in self-defence the stained and discarded weapons of Law. Even if the battle of the Reformation had to be fought over again, surely we might find something better than the old barbarisms of such a warfare, some strategic skill made wiser by the lessons of experience. If there be danger, it is not by fettering Romanism, but by freeing

Protestantism, that the evil can be met. We do not intend to argue the question of the new Catholic hierarchy,—a question so strangely created and run into exhaustion within three months. But, in closing this notice of a kindred topic, we desire to record our conviction, that while the present attitude of the Romish Church calls for the private counteraction of an opposing zeal and fidelity, no case has appeared for restrictive legislation; and that if *something* must be allowed to the offended dignity of the country, the concession should be strictly limited to a *moral* and declaratory, and by no means include any *penal*, retort.

VII.

PHAETHON.

We have few greater teachers than Mr. Kingsley, yet none more certain to go astray the moment he becomes didactic. The truths which move him most he reads off at a glance; and the attempt to exhibit them to others as the result of intellectual elaboration naturally fails. His genius is altogether that of the artist, for the apprehension of concrete reality, not that of the philosopher, for finding in thought the grounds and connections of what he perceives. With rare qualifications for seeing, feeling, and believing right, were he to abstain from reasoning, he would not often be wrong. No living writer brings a quicker eye to catch the looks of nature, a humaner heart to interpret the tragedy of life, a devouter faith to hope for the good while contending with the ill. His descriptive passages have the very smell of a new-ploughed field; his insight into the secret sorrows of a sceptic and selfish age is evidently caught through the manly tears of pity, and not by the dry stare of inquisitorial suspicion; and his aspirations after a nobler and juster society—however ill-defended from objection—are clearly the product of a healthful reverence for human nature and trust in the Living God. The very faults which attach to his productions as works of art arise from the intensity of his moral convictions and the obtru-

* "Phaethon; or, Loose Thoughts for Loose Thinkers." By Rev. Charles Kingsley, Canon of Middleham and Rector of Eversley. Macmillan. 1852.—*Prospective Review*, 1853.

siveness of generous sympathy, rushing in to disturb the dramatic impartiality of his representations. His ideal world,—the type of character he loves, the spirit of life he sighs to create, the religious faiths to which he clings,—we seldom find to be without deep truth and beauty: the admirations and aversions he awakens are essentially wholesome and ennobling; and if he errs, it is in fitting them on amiss to actual classes and persons little known to him by direct experience. True alike in direct observation and in pure conception, he is apt to mistake in the mixed region of half-seen realities, where vision gives but the outline and the colouring is filled in by thought. Towards the object painted he teaches you to direct the right feeling, be it of love or hate; but when he borrows his names from actual men and things, he sometimes labels the object wrong, and so misdirects the favour or disfavour of his readers towards the personages of the present or the past. Whatever his impulsive nature seizes on as odious on *any* account, is liable, if discerned in the obscurity of distance, to appear to him odious on *all* accounts; and he accumulates accusations upon it which have no congruity with one another, and constructs defences against it which miss the path of its approach.

This combination of just and clear feeling with unjust and confused polemic is curiously exemplified in Mr. Kingsley's Phaethon. In this little book, which borrows its form from the Dialogue of the Academy, the author applies his reverence for Socrates and imitation of Plato to express his abhorrence of Emerson. More charming painting and more miserable reasoning, better dialogue and worse dialectic, so strong a flavour of good English sentiment, and so faint a trace of any Hellenic thought, it would be difficult to find within the compass of a hundred pages professing to take their inspiration from the schools of Athens. Plato is a dangerous master to men in whom a fervid genius has not been tempered by the severest discipline. His infinite fascination depends, like the charm of

all great works of Grecian art, on the blending and balance in one grand whole of the chief elements of strength and beauty; and it is vain for any mind of partial faculty, however genuine, to attempt the same effects. With some approach to him in power of portraiture, in graceful dialogue, in religious depth, in pregnant irony, Mr. Kingsley has nothing in common with his speculative subtlety and his systematizing symmetry and grasp. The consequence in the present volume is an unhappy caricature of the most questionable features of the Platonic method; introduced by a delightful English prelude where no Socrates is wanted, and followed by a deep-hearted English conversation when he is gone. Whatever persuasive power the volume may have resides, we venture to say, wholly in these passages of mere delineation, and is only impaired by the intermediate tissue of ambiguities and sophisms.

The theme of the book is professedly the tendency of Emerson's philosophy; and especially the doctrine that, as long as men sincerely speak and live by the faith they have, its relation to absolute truth is a matter, if not of indifference, at least of no practical concern. The scene is laid in the park of a Herefordshire gentleman, Templeton by name; at whose dinner-table the topic has already been discussed, the day before the opening of the piece, on the occasion of a visit to the hall of one Professor Windrush, an American prophet of the "spiritual school." The party gathered around the table had been such as to draw out all the points of the controversy. The hostess, Lady Jane Templeton, a refined and saintly evangelical, having retired with the ladies to the drawing-room, there were left a blundering High Church curate, who was no match for the transcendentalist; Templeton himself, offended by the professor's rudeness and irreverence, but intellectually in sympathy with his doctrines; and a clerical friend and former college companion of Templeton's, who evidently represents Mr. Kingsley's own sentiments, Socratically defending the Catholic creeds, and who appears in the first person through

the volume as narrator of the whole. Of this party, only the last two,—the host and the philosophical clergyman,—are personally brought upon the scene. The colloquy is between them alone. On the morning after the Windrush visit, we find them on the bank of the park stream, with fishing-rod in hand, but with the oppression of yesterday's controversy so heavy on their minds that the chances of sport pass unheeded by; and on the old keeper's venturing, as he strolled by, to twit them with their awkwardness, they find out that their thoughts are running on the same matter; and the clergyman confesses that he has been sitting up all night, writing a Platonic dialogue in exposure of the professor's heresies. The manuscript is in his pocket; and as, in their present humour, they prefer philosophy to fish, it is produced and read as they sit upon the grass. To the hour and the spot of this piece of out-door dialectic we are brought by the following delicate sketch from nature:—

"Templeton and I were lounging by the clear limestone stream which crossed his park, and wound away round wooded hills towards the distant Severn. A lovelier fishing morning sportsman never saw. A soft gray under-roof of cloud slid on before a soft west wind, and here and there a stray gleam of sunlight shot into the vale across the purple mountain-tops, and awoke into busy life the denizens of the water, already quickened by the mysterious electric influences of the last night's thunder-shower. The long-winged cinnamon-flies spun and fluttered over the pools; the sand-bees hummed merrily round their burrows in the marly bank; and delicate iridescent ephemeræ rose by hundreds from the depths, and, dropping their shells, floated away, each a tiny Venus Anadyomene, down the glassy ripples of the reaches. Every moment a heavy splash beneath some overhanging tuft of mill-foil or water-hemlock, proclaimed the death-doom of a hapless beetle, who had dropped into the stream beneath; yet still we fished, and fished, and caught nothing, and seemed utterly careless about catching anything; till the old keeper, who followed us, sighing and shrugging his shoulders, broke forth into open remonstrance."—(P. 1.)

The figure of Professor Windrush is skilfully brought out,

touch after touch, by the preliminary conversation of the two companions. Many of the separate strokes are capital, and place before us to the life one phase or other of the modern American freethinker. The curiosity of the republican traveller, avowed on presenting his letters of introduction, to witness "the inner hearth-life of the English landed aristocracy"; the petting he has enjoyed at Manchester from the local illumina*ti* and *-tæ* to whom every sceptic is a hero; his worship of the "glorious nineteenth century," and contempt for more elderly beliefs; the credulous expenditure of his unemployed faculty of wonder and zeal on mesmerisms, electro-biologies, loves of the plants, and vegetarianisms; the thaumaturgic cant which talks of the spiritual world as if it were within the sphere of sense, and then balances the account by "spiriting" the material away into a fanciful mythology; his neutral admiration of all well-marked specimens of any sort of man; his faith, not so much in the unity of "the Deity," as in the non-Trinity of *it*; present us with a series of features, not one of which can fail of recognition by observers familiar with the mental pathology of the newest time and the youngest nation. But by uniting them all in one person, and giving them as the characteristics of one "school," Mr. Kingsley has produced a confused and inconceivable picture; and by attaching to this picture at one time the name of Emerson, at another that of Parker, and then an allusion to Francis Newman, he commits a practical injustice. To make each of these writers responsible for the theories of the others, and all of them for the superstitions of magnetists, ascetics, and magicians, is at once a fallacy and an injury. Our author adopts the prevalent fashion of including them all under the name of "spiritualists": but if this word expresses, as we suppose, a belief in the soul's apprehension of divine truth by immediate communion with God rather than by external media, it not only includes Mr. Kingsley himself, but denotes the very doctrine which his Platonic dialogue is written to up-

hold. The practice of classing all persons together who agree in their negative attitude towards the historical Scriptures is not surprising among the mere populace of Christendom: to them there are no differences discernible beyond their own circle: Protagoras and Parmenides, Plato and Hippias, Zeno and Epicurus,—nay, Proclus and Mohammed,—are all simply "heathens" alike. But such indiscrimination is without excuse in a scholar and a divine; nor can we understand how any one whose creed is wide enough to take Socrates as a proper type of method in religious thought, and who knows how to oppose him to the sophists and atheists of his day, can refuse to feel the presence of a deep and noble religion in Theodore Parker and Francis Newman, or can condescend to suppress the contrast which separates them from Emerson. It would be difficult to find two living writers more diametrically opposed to one another in their whole mode of thought and feeling, in the structure of their beliefs, in the tendency of their lives, than Emerson and Parker; and equally difficult to find two men more alike in the roots of their faith and character than Kingsley and Parker. The English rector and the Boston preacher are nothing less, we do believe, than twin brothers in the eye of reality; their intense moral convictions, their impatient social compassions and indignations, their eloquent dogmatism, their deep trust in a Holy God and his ever-living inspiration, their aversion to the sublime neutrality of our modern nature-worship, their reverence for the immortal capacities of the soul,—mark them out as not far apart in the invisible church; indeed, as joint prophets set to rebuke all despair of divine truth and indifferentism to human duty. Listening more to his ecclesiastical antipathies than to his natural sympathies, Mr. Kingsley has put into one category,—because they are all outside the "Catholic creeds,"—persons whose whole bases and development of belief are entirely different from one another. The consequence is, that he has set before himself and his readers no one clear form of heresy or unbelief

for refutation. The proposition which he chiefly attacks is the characteristic of no nameable school; is expressed in language vaguely figurative; and exposed in arguments which play with the metaphor employed, and evade the reality concealed. That proposition, attributed to Windrush, is thus introduced by the clergyman, in his conversation with Templeton:—

"'Do you think, moreover, that the theory which he so boldly started, when his nerves and his manners were relieved from the unwonted pressure by Lady Jane and the ladies going upstairs, was part of the same old foundation?'

"'Which, then?'

"'*That, if a man does but believe a thing, he has a right to speak it and act on it, right or wrong?* Have you forgotten his vindication of your friend, the Radical voter, and his "spirit of truth"?'

"'What, the worthy who, when I canvassed him as the Liberal candidate for ———, and promised to support freedom of religious opinion, tested me by breaking out into such blasphemous ribaldry as made me run out of the house, and then went up and voted against me as a bigot?'

"'I mean him, of course. The professor really seemed to admire the man, as a more brave and conscientious hero than himself. I am not squeamish, as you know, but I am afraid that I was quite rude to him when he went as far as that.'

"'What, when you told him that you thought that, after all, the old theory of the divine right of kings was as plausible as the new theory of the divine right of blasphemy? My dear fellow, do not fret yourself on that point. He seemed to take it rather as a compliment to his own audacity, and whispered to me that "The Divine Right of Blasphemy" was an expression of which Theodore Parker himself need not have been ashamed.'

"'He was pleased to be complimentary. But, tell me, what was it in his oratory which has so vexed the soul of the country 'squire?'

"'That very argument of his, among many things. I saw, or rather felt, that he was wrong; and yet, as I have said already, I could not answer him; and, had he not been my guest, should have got thoroughly cross with him as a *pis aller*.'

'I saw it. But, my friend, used we not to read Plato together, and enjoy him together, in old Cambridge days? Do you not think that Socrates might at all events have driven the professor into a corner?'

"'He might; but I cannot. Is that, then, what you were writing about all last night?'

"It was.'"—(P. 14.)

According to this statement, the question which the Dialogue undertakes to solve is a purely ethical question, "Whether a man *ought to speak out unconditionally his own sincere convictions;* or whether such duty *is contingent on his convictions being absolutely true.*"

Whoever maintains the latter is bound to produce a test whereby we may distinguish absolute truth from relative certitude; otherwise he leaves the duty of veracious profession subject to an impossible condition, and condemns it never to appear. With this fatal omission Mr. Kingsley's Socrates is chargeable.

To maintain the former, we need not assume that absolute truth is unattainable or unimportant, and say that, provided we get a faithful picture of men's thought, it is of no consequence whether their thought be a correct image of reality. On the contrary, those who affirm that there is, at all events, a good in veracious profession, do so, not simply from the moral instinct of ingenuousness, but also with a view to the ulterior good of realized truth; regarding the comparison of conceptions as the appointed prelude to the command of facts. The opinion, which is thus directly expressive of a *hope* of truth, is made, by Mr. Kingsley's Protagoras, to imply a total *despair* of it, and an utter *indifference* to it.

The question is not helped forward to solution by showing that mischiefs are attendant on the belief, and therefore on the propagation, of error. Good, also, attends on the belief, and therefore on the propagation, of truth. "Sincere convictions" are, to their possessor, identical with truth: did he withhold them from fear of doing mischief, he would

either treat them as false,—which contradicts their sincerity; or would assume truth to be hurtful,—which is the meanest atheism.

Nor, finally, do we gain any light for our problem by being told that there are times and places unsuitable for the divulging of certain thoughts, however sincerely entertained. There is no human duty that may not be similarly misplaced, and that has not to be assigned to its proper season by the exercise of moral tact and judgment. If you think a man a fool, you are not to go and tell him so; but if your best friend proposes to take him into partnership and asks your opinion of him, you are bound to speak your mind. It is not that there are any supposed truths intrinsically unfit to be uttered; but that there are none that may not be abusively dislocated by passion and imprudence.

Yet these irrelevant positions are the only ones which Mr. Kingsley's dialectic even attempts to make good against the doctrine of ingenuous unreserve. Thus his *Thesis* (1.) extinguishes the obligation of intellectual veracity by submitting it to an impossible condition; (2.) attributes to his opponents a scepticism (as to the accessibility of truth) with which their opinion could not co-exist. And his *Argument* shows only, what nobody denies, namely, (1.) the invariable hurtfulness of believed error; and (2.) the occasional unseasonableness of spoken truth.

The scene opens with the arrival at the Pnyx of the young Alcibiades and Phaethon, and the discovery of Socrates, standing with his face towards the rising sun, rapt in prayer for light to see the truth, in whatever matters might be discussed there that day. Alcibiades and his companion had been discussing, on their way, a yesterday's lecture of Protagoras, the doctrine of which they thus describe to Socrates:—

"Truth was what each man troweth, or believeth to be true. 'So that,' he said, 'one thing is true to me, if I believe it true, and another opposite thing to you, if you believe that opposite.

'For,' continued he, 'there is an objective and a subjective truth; the former, doubtless, one and absolute, and contained in the nature of each thing; but the other manifold and relative, varying with the faculties of each perceiver thereof. But as each man's faculties,' he said, 'were different from his neighbour's, and all more or less imperfect, it was impossible that the absolute objective truth of anything could be seen by any mortal, but only some partial approximation, and, as it were, sketch of it, according as the object was represented with more or less refraction on the mirror of his subjectivity. And therefore, as the true inquirer deals only with the possible, and lets the impossible go, it was the business of the wise man, shunning the search after absolute truth as an impious attempt of the Titans to scale Olympus, to busy himself humbly and practically with subjective truth, and with those methods,—rhetoric for instance,—by which he can make the subjective opinions of others either similar to his own, or, leaving them as they are,—for it may be very often unnecessary to change them,—useful to his own ends.'"—(P. 19.)

It is perhaps too much to expect that our author, any more than the historical novelists, should bind his fiction by any close fidelity to fact. Having set himself to find, within the Athens of the Socratic age, a true sample of the New England Emersonian, he may have been obliged to put up with Protagoras, as the best-matching sophist that could be had. But we fear that the Protagoras of the Theætetus would hardly know himself again in the disguise of the Phaethon. The principle of his scepticism,—indeed of the whole Hellenic logic,—is mis-stated here, and confounded with a modern doctrine essentially different. "The *subjective* is all that we can attain; and it affords no certain clue to lead us to the *objective*," is the maxim of modern Idealism, and of the Critical Philosophy on its speculative side. "The *phenomenal* is all that comes before us; and thence no bridge can be found to conduct us to the *real*,"—was the position of the sophistic school of Athens. The antithesis expressed by the words "subject" and "object," with all the problems involved in it, was latent in the Greek

schools, and there prevailed instead another antithesis, partly indeed concurring with the former, but crossing it at various points, expressed by the words γιγνόμενα and ὄντα. The charge against human knowledge was not, that one man's faculties reported differently from another's, so as to exhibit subjective discrepancies; nor that, however accordant with itself, it was still all a subjective affair, without any objective guarantee; but that the universe being merely the perpetual genesis and flow of phenomena, there *were* no fixed realities to be known. This principle was borrowed from Heracleitus: but he had resolved only the external world into the procession of eternal change, and had left to the mind at least the power or knowing *phenomena*. Protagoras advanced a step further; extending the rule to man as well as the rest of nature, he contended that the percipient not less than the perceived, the active as well as the passive condition of perception, was liable to the law of Heracleitus, and that what we call external phenomena are but the product of a relation between two transiencies, without any constant term. Apart from sight there is no colour, apart from hearing, no sound; and where there is no perception, there is no phenomenon, and therefore nothing. This is the meaning of his celebrated maxim, that "Man is the measure of all things," phenomena requiring his senses as their condition; and existence being at zero where phenomena are not. When, therefore, our author makes Protagoras say that "there is an objective truth," which is "doubtless one and absolute, contained in the nature of each thing," the statement is at variance with the fundamental doctrine of his system. The search after this "absolute truth," so far from appearing to him an "impious attempt" to reach a reality too divine for us, was the mere futile grasp of a dreamer at a non-existence. And hence, the limitation of ourselves to phenomena was no humble surrender of impossible though desirable attainments,—no acquiescence in necessary ignornace; but a positive converse with the only things there were. It was

therefore, in his view, not an ignorance, but a knowledge; and error, not truth, was the condition unattributable to thought. His maxim was that "*All* thought is knowledge," and the contrary proposition, that "*No* thought is knowledge," belongs not to him, but to Gorgias. We quite admit the *moral* equivalence of the two positions: but their logical derivation is different, and the affinity of both with the Emersonian tendency too slight to justify the representative function which Mr. Kingsley has assigned to them.

Waiving, however, all historical niceties, and taking the doctrine as it is set up for attack, we are afraid that our author's dialectic weapons fly all round it without so much as grazing it at all. The first stage of the argument brings us to the conclusion that it is possible, and hurtful, to believe what is false; a proposition which Mr. Kingsley's Protagoras has not the least interest in denying, and does, indeed, *ipso facto* admit, when at the outset he allows an objective reality, and complains that men, who cannot *know* it, will yet *think* about it. Nor would the genuine Protagoras question for a moment the *hurtfulness* of such a δόξα as the following sentences amusingly describe:—

"*Socrates.* 'Therefore, if a thing subjectively true be also objectively false, it does not exist and is nothing.'

"'It is so,' said I.

"*Socrates.* 'Let us, then, let nothing go its own way, while we go on ours with this which is only objectively true, lest coming to a river, over which it is objectively true to us that there is a bridge, and trying to walk over that work of our own minds, but no one's hands, the bridge prove to be objectively false, and we, walking over the bank into the water, be set free from that which is subjective on the further bank of the Styx.'

"Then I, laughing, 'This hardly coincides, Alcibiades, with Protagoras's opinion, that subjective truth was alone useful.'

"'But rather proves,' said Socrates, 'that undiluted draughts of it are of a hurtful and poisonous nature, and require to be tempered with somewhat of objective truth, before it is safe to use them at least in the case of bridges.'"—(P. 25.)

In the Theætetus (166, C.—167, C.) Protagoras is made to explain his mode of dealing with just such cases as these. He allows fully that the opinions of men may widely differ from one another in utility or hurtfulness, in healthy or morbid character, in wisdom or folly; that none is so skilled as the physician in relation to animal life, or as the farmer in relation to vegetable growth. Mr. Kingsley's ideal bridge he would simply call a πονηρὰ αἴσθησις; and instead of being bound to uphold it, as if nothing subjective could come amiss, would condemn it precisely and solely on the ground of its mischievousness. Having flung away the test of anterior objective reality, he was forced all the more to that of consequent injury or good. True, no thought could, in his phraseology, be other than *knowledge*. But within this comprehensive category, he made room for the better and the worse, the salutary and the pernicious: his effigy would have been the fittest vignette for the publications of the *Useful Knowledge Society;* and should the loquacious shades of Protagoras and Lord Brougham ever meet, a little rhetoric may be naturally exchanged in claiming the preconception of that renowned association.

The next stage of the discussion is occupied in extending to things moral and religious the allegation now admitted in reference to things physical, namely, that error is mischievous, and carries in it painful consequences, not from the anger of any offended being, but from the jarring relations in which it places us with the real nature of things. Just as a mistake in arithmetic spoils our accounts and is felt within our purse; in music, creates dissonance instead of harmony; in the reading of human character, places us at the mercy of a knave; so must every false interpretation of the cause of causes, the legislator of law, bring men into discordance with the primary thought and purpose of the universe, involving the loss of needful help, or the dangers of vain reliance. Towards an Infinite Being, moreover, all errors must be errors of defect; and he who falls into them, lives as if under a rule *less* just and holy than that which

really embraces him; a mistake operating in the worst direction, and, as measured by the greatness of its object, little less than infinite in its amount and in its misery.

"'As if, for instance, a man believing that Zeus loves him less than He really does, should become superstitious and self-tormenting. Or, believing that Zeus will guide him less than He really will, he should go his own way through life without looking for that guidance; or if, believing that Zeus cares about his conquering his passions less than He really does, he should become careless and despairing in the struggle; or if, believing that Zeus is less interested in the welfare of mankind than He really is, he should himself neglect to assist them, and so lose the glory of being called a benefactor of his country; would not all these mistakes be hurtful ones?'

"'Certainly,' said I; but Alcibiades was silent.

"*S.* 'And would not these mistakes, by the hypothesis, themselves punish him who made them, without any resentment whatsoever, or Nemesis of the gods, being required for his chastisement?'

"'It seems so,' said I.

"*S.* 'But can we say of such mistakes, and of the harm which may accrue from them, anything but that they must both be infinite; seeing that they are mistakes concerning an infinite Being, and his infinite properties, on every one of which, and on all together, our daily existence depends?'

"*P.* 'It seems so.'

"*S.* 'So that, until such a man's error concerning Zeus, the source of all things, is cleared up, either in this life or in some future one, we cannot but fear for him infinite confusion, misery, and harm, in all matters which he may take in hand.'"—(P. 32.)

No deeper truth can there be than this; and no nobler statement of it. It has a tone in it of Plato's voice; touched by which, we find it hard to listen to the scruples of criticism, begging us to explain the logical relevancy of this reflection to the main argument. Yet what would our Socrates have us to do? Granted all error is mischievous; religious error, transcendently so; what then? Do you say, that we must not make ourselves parties to the mischief,

by propagating error? We have no intention to do so; no man ever had. When we utter our convictions, it is in *resistance* to error; and the more you persuade us of its mischief, the more must we be impelled to speak. "Hitherto" (might a Phaethon and Alcibiades say) "we have always found, in the evils of human ignorance and mistake, the strongest reason for endeavouring to correct them according to our light, and contributing whatever better word seemed given us to say; and though it was not hidden from us that we too might possibly be wrong, yet whether it were so, there appeared no better way to tell, than by submitttng our thought to the great dialectic of the world. For in consorting with you, O Socrates, we have experienced the following thing: We have come to you with a secret opinion on some matter,—perhaps about justice, or beauty, or the gods,—which seemed to us right, and which we had never fetched out of the silent part of us, so that we or anybody else could hear it. And when we were asking you about quite a different thing,—it might be geometry or music,—you have somehow caused us to confess in words this secret opinion, and have put to us many questions with regard to it, so that we could not help seeing whether it agreed or disagreed with other things which also appeared certain. At the end of our talk we have been ashamed to find how little true and noble was the opinion which we had supposed so good; and we are afraid we should never have discovered this, had you not made us *speak* our thought and hear about it: for so long as it lay still, it had a comely look; and was like a person who when asleep indeed appears beautiful, but opening his eyes and getting up, is found to squint and hobble. How then is it, O Socrates, that your maieutic art consists in making us, even against our will, openly *speak out* our errors, and so become free from them; and yet now you advise us, of our own resolve, 'to hold our tongue about them'?"

In short, when the inquirer has spared no honest

endeavours to see things as they are, there are but two inferences open to him from his contemplation of the mischiefs of mistake. He must either say everything, in hope that it may be truth; or say nothing, for fear it should be error. To do the last is to hold, in relation to his belief, the attitude of unbelief; to presume the falsehood of all thought; to behave towards his own truth as if it were nature's lie; to act therefore on the postulate that the human faculties are instruments of delusion; and what is this but the ultimate stage of the most pestilent scepticism? To do the former is to protest against the despair of truth; to assume it to be attainable, and to love it as the best; to trust in the power of reality to get the better of semblance, and work its current on by the insensible abrasion of ignorance and obstinacy; to live in the faith that the mind of man is capable of veracious correspondence with the facts of God: and what is this but a healthy and devout persuasion, the common basis of philosophy and religion? Between these extreme courses there is no intermediate; unless Mr. Kingsley will show us how he can be simultaneously conscious and unconscious of mistake in what we hold; retaining it in thought from presumption of its truth; suppressing it in speech from consternation at its error.

Whether our author himself was, up to this point, quite convinced by his own reasoning, we cannot but feel some doubt; for, in the next and third stage of the argument, his dialectic assumes a termagant character; he loses all logical count, and scolds at the human impulse to utter ingenuously what is believed sincerely, as a propensity absolutely brutish. The discussion here becomes purely *ethical*, respecting the value of a certain inner spring of action, namely, "*the spirit of truth*," which is defined as the feeling which leads a man to "*say honestly what he believes*." In order to strip this "spirit" of all moral character, Mr. Kingsley begins by supposing it to say *dishonestly* what it does *not* believe; after which ingenious tack, there is nothing but plain sailing to the end of the

argument. Whether Alcibiades or Socrates be the greater simpleton, in the following outset of the discussion, let the reader judge :—

"*Alcibiades.* 'I assert, that whoever says honestly what he believes, does so by the spirit of truth.'

"*Socrates.* 'Then, if Lyce, patting those soft cheeks of yours, were to say, "Alcibiades, thou art the fairest youth in Athens," she would speak by the spirit of truth?'

"*Alcibiades.* 'They say so.'

"*Socrates.* 'And they say rightly. But if Lyce, as is her custom, *wished by so doing to cheat you into believing that she loved you*, and thereby to wheedle you out of a new shawl, she would still speak by the spirit of truth?'

"*Alcibiades.* 'I suppose so.'"—(P. 35.)

Lyce's sly ways having passed muster as examples of "honest belief," the counsel who had appealed with success to this audacious illustration, has it all his own way; and the "spirit of truth" is speedily and opprobriously put out of court; not, however, without further damage from confused and calumnious fallacies. To illustrate its temper, the case is put, of a person gratuitously proclaiming to the world a shameful act of which he knows, or perhaps only suspects, his own father to have been guilty; and as an example of its morals, in action rather than in speech, we are referred to the systematic and conscientious murders of the Thugs! We own to a feeling of shame and grief, when we find these wretched and worn-out pleas, with which incompetence and sciolism in philosophy are accustomed to assail the first principles of morals, adopted in a moment of blindness by a great religious teacher, and used by him expressly to fling contempt upon the personal reverence for truth and right. Mr. Kingsley must know perfectly well how to answer himself, and resolve the perplexities of his own examples. A son who publishes his father's shame acts against natural affection and filial reverence; and no one would justify this, unless the spring of action which he obeys is higher than that which he puts aside. The "spirit

of truth," which he is said to follow, may be a very good spirit, and yet may fall in sometimes with a better than itself. It is indeed a mistake to deal with it as a *simple* spring of action at all; for, by its very definition, it compounds and entangles itself with the social affections, postulates them in every act, and takes the complexion of their worth. *Truth* (as here taken) is an affair of *speech:* speech implies the presence of hearers, and has its motive in our relation to them, and our sense of their interest in what we have to say. If the matter which lies ready for utterance belong to the realm of *doctrinal or speculative* belief, it is of cosmopolitan concern; and all men on or near our own intellectual level have a right to expect from our common human feeling a veracious interchange of thought. If it be *political*, the duty springs from national sentiment, and the claim upon us is narrowed to members of the same State. If it be *domestic*, the obligation contracts itself to the circle round the hearth; if *private*, it vanishes from without, and falls back into our own solitary mind. A father's guilt,—supposing it to be personal sin, not public crime,—is not a thing that the world at large has any need or any right to know; the son who proclaims it cannot be supposed to act from any solicitation of social affection; and, even if he could, still the ascendency in him, without any constraining obligation from mutual understanding, of the dilute cosmopolitan feeling over the concentrate filial reverence, would be a shocking depravity. It is not his speaking *the truth*, but his speaking *at all*, that we condemn in such a case; and whenever we applaud the "spirit of truth," we refer invariably, not to any fondness for delivering ourselves on all occasions, and to everybody, of the whole volume of our beliefs, but to the disposition never, *at the crises proper for the introduction of a given topic*, to leave a false impression, either by what we say, or by what we withhold. The choice of proper crises must be determined by various conditions,—many of them foreign to the present question, and contingent on the grouping of social relations in the midst of

which we stand. As to the case of Thuggism, and other odious fanaticisms, if Mr. Kingsley does not know how to distinguish between speech against the common opinions of men, and overt crimes against their natural rights and common conscience,—if he thinks, as he says, that both alike require "to be restrained,"—he certainly vindicates the claim of his dialogue to its title of "Loose Thoughts for Loose Thinkers"; and, in one sense, converts us to his own doctrine, that it were well for a man to "restrain" in himself a "spirit of truth" which rushes into ethical questions without accurate insight into their nature, or reasonable preparation for their solution. On such subjects it is a very grave responsibility for a public teacher consciously to throw out "*Loose* Thoughts," and still more to fling them superciliously down as good enough for "Loose Thinkers," —the very persons to whom such homœopathic treatment is sure to be most poisonous. A less careless temerity of argument would better have bespoken a reverence for truth, as holy; and a less flippant title-page have better suited a temper considerate to error, as human.

What, then, is the amount of our author's assertion, that the "spirit of truth" is not a *moral* feeling, because it is *indifferent to right and wrong*, as when a son proclaims a father's shame? Simply this: that the truth of a thing is not of itself sufficient to recommend its utterance at any chance moment when it comes into the mind; but that the right or wrong of speaking it depends on the concurrent presence or absence of other conditions. If this be sufficient to withdraw a feeling from the category "Moral," we have no one moral feeling at all; for there is not a spring of action which has autocratic rights of self-assertion, without taking counsel of whatever other impulses, and whatever outward circumstances simultaneously appear upon the field. Again: what means the statement, that "the spirit of truth" is not *intellectual*, because, being content with the avowal of sincere, though questionable opinion, it is *indifferent to truth and falsehood?* Simply this: that veracity is no sufficient

guarantee of knowledge, but may co-exist with mistake. In this sense, it will be allowed on all hands that sincerity of profession is not an *intellectual* quality: but is it therefore to be described as "*indifferent* to truth and falsehood"; a phrase which implies that the sincere man does not care whether his belief be true or false, and that his sincerity bears not only an indecisive relation, but absolutely *no* relation to the apprehension of facts as they are? Veracity of profession, at all events, proceeds on the hypothesis that *reality is best;* and it is so far *intellectual;* and also on the further hypothesis, that to *perceive a reality* is to hold a trust, and *lie under an obligation;* and it is so far *moral.* In direct contradiction, therefore, of Mr. Kingsley's assertion, we submit that "the spirit of truth" is *both* intellectual and moral, and *that* without the mixture of any other element whatever. It is indeed inadequate to the determination of truth and duty; but it is concerned with nothing else.

Throughout the argument of our author, the want must be felt, by even his most convinced disciples, of some practical rule, separating the cases in which they ought to declare their belief, from those in which they ought to hide it. At last the rule comes out; they are to speak out *when they agree with the many;* to be silent, when they have other thoughts of their own. The atheist, we are told, is bound to conceal his unbelief:—

"For there would be far more chance that he alone was wrong, and the many right, than that the many were wrong, and he alone right. He would therefore commit an insolent and conceited action, and, moreover, a cruel and shameless one; for he would certainly make miserable, if he were believed, the hearts of many virtuous persons who had never harmed him, for no immediate or demonstrable purpose except that of pleasing his own self-will; and that much more, were he wrong in his assertion."—(P. 41.)

If this process, of consulting the suffrages of mankind, is good against the *expression,* it is good also and antecedently against the *belief* of atheism. The man is to hold his

tongue, in the persuasion that most probably he is in the wrong; in the persuasion, therefore, that the evidence goes against him, and that "the Gods exist" after all. So the reasoning stands thus: he ought not to *say*, "I am an atheist"; why?—because he ought not to *be* an atheist. The obligation to *suppress* the belief is deduced from the obligation to *renounce* it; and the duty of silence about a conviction is made contingent, by our author himself, on the conviction being no longer there to avow. He cannot justify the silence, except by expelling the very matter for speech. Thus it turns out impossible, after all, for a high-minded man, like Mr. Kingsley, to set up a defence of insincerity without translating it back into sincerity first.

The injunction, however, to accept the votes of a majority as decisive of greater probability in questions of religion is futile and impracticable. The authority of numbers and acknowledged wisdom necessarily and properly determines our belief in matters whose inner relations we have never entered; and we receive without question the diagnosis of our physician, and abide by the judgment of our lawyer. But when once we have investigated *the grounds* on which a doctrine rests, and pronounced them to ourselves inadequate, the consciousness of this inadequacy cannot be affected by any reckoning of the votes against us. An outside observer indeed, looking only at our paucity compared with the common voice of all mankind besides, may fairly surmise that, when the lots are drawn from the urn of reality, the white ball of truth will not be found with us. But once admitted into the interior processes and texture of belief, we cannot transpose ourselves again into the blind external position to which alone this computation of chances is approximate: we feel as though we had looked into the urn, and read off the fated rule by which the award must fall. Nor is it just to charge with insolence and conceit those who refuse to surrender the convictions of seeming insight to the voices of other men. It is not modesty; it is not faith; but, on the contrary, a lax and

impious scepticism, to look reason in the face and say, "probably it is a lie"; to feel ourselves behind the sacred screen of reality, yet treat it as the hiding-place of jugglers, that play us false. It is a more fatal thing to lose the reverence for *fact*,—that last root of religion, which even atheism does not destroy,—than to lower our intellectual deference for the opinions of mankind. Does Mr. Kingsley really think that, whether there were a God or not, his existence and providence should at all events be taught? Would our author himself, if unhappily he lost his belief in immortality, deem it, notwithstanding, best to keep up the notion, and, in giving the moral picture of the world and life, to substitute a fictitious theory of men for the real programme of God? Impossible? and yet, if the lips of doubt and disbelief are to be sealed, if philosophy is always to expound and never to dispute the *consensus* of the greater multitude, this doctrine of imposture cannot be escaped.

Sufficient discredit having been thrown upon the Windrush spirit-of-truth, it disappears from the dialogue; and in its place the author's real spirit of truth presents itself for interpretation. To release it from its subjective limits as a mere private propensity; to assign to it not only an objective but a divine and self-conscious nature; in fine, to raise it to the character of the Logos as a common medium of reason between the minds of men and God, is the purpose of this concluding portion of the discussion. We cannot profess to think either the reasoning or the conclusion satisfactory: the one appears to us illogical, and the other pantheistic. The arguments are these: (1.) The spirit of truth *tells* facts as they are; therefore *sees* them as they are: but this is a power possessed exclusively by God; therefore the light by which moral truth is discerned is not human, but divine. (2.) What we *long for*, is not yet possessed by us, is moreover beyond us, and not either an effect or a part of us: we long for truth; which is therefore beyond our personality,—is not ours to win or to possess;

hence the spirit of truth is a foreign agency which *possesses us*, and vouchsafes to us a portion of holy light. (3.) As *seeing*, the spirit of truth is *intellectual;* as seeing facts of a moral nature, it is *moral;* therefore also *personal;* and as seeing God, it is God, who alone can know himself. In calling the conclusion pantheistic, we do not use this much-abused word vaguely but strictly, to express the sacrifice of the human personality to the claims of the Divine Infinitude. The spirit of truth, being that whereby we see facts as they are, is coextensive in us with our rational nature; and if, in being personal, it be God himself, what personality is left for us? Our whole rational nature being flung away into the Infinite Mind, nothing remains but the brute element in us, where it were vain to look for any attribute that will keep us in the rank of *persons*, and prevent us from being only *things*. God thus becomes the only Intellect of the universe; and though our personality is surrendered for no other purpose than to provide for his, and the doctrine of a personal God may thus appear to be pre-eminently secure; yet those who have studied the courses of human belief know that the very reverse is true; that without the relation between two persons, there cannot long survive the attributes of one; and that to drown the human soul is, for purposes of faith, to desolate if not to dissipate the Divine. This very inference, moreover, by which our author reduces the persons in the universe to One, is drawn from an argument which supposes *two;*—there is a being who *longs* for the truth, and is therefore *a person:* there is *an object longed for;* which again is affirmed to be *also a person:* there are consequently in the premisses two persons who, in the conclusion, disappear into one. We content ourselves with pointing out this interior contradiction in Mr. Kingsley's doctrine; without pressing any further analysis upon arguments which probably have neither convinced any reader, nor served as the real grounds of conviction to the author himself.

But there is one inference deduced from his theory,

which must not be passed without remark. If all our intellectual apprehension is a direct presence of God in person, it must be and must give only pure and unmixed truth. Whence then the errors into which we fall? Since the divine light is without blemish, and is never denied to our longing prayer, its deficiency and failure must be ascribed to the want on our part of adequate love and aspiration. In other words, mistaken judgments and discordant faiths are referable solely to moral causes, and are to be regarded as proofs of guilt.

Phaethon. "Yet what are we to say of those who, sincerely loving and longing after knowledge, yet arrive at false conclusions, which are proved to be false by contradicting each other?"

Socrates. "We are to say, Phaethon, that they have not loved knowledge enough to desire utterly to see facts as they are, but only to see them as they would wish them to be; and, loving themselves rather than Zeus, have wished to remodel in some things or other his universe, according to their own subjective opinions. By this, or by some other act of self-will, or self-conceit, or self-dependence, they have compelled Zeus, not, as I think, without pity and kindness to them, to withdraw from them in some degree, the sight of his own beauty. We must therefore, I fear, liken them to Acharis, the painter of Lemnos, who, intending to represent Phœbus, painted from a mirror a copy of his own defects and deformities; or perhaps to that Nymph, who finding herself beloved by Phœbus, instead of reverently and silently returning his affection, boasted of it to all her neighbours as a token of her own beauty, and despised the God; so that he, being angry, changed her into a chattering magpie; or again, to Arachne, who having been taught the art of weaving by Athene, pretended to compete with her own instructress, and being metamorphosed by her into a spider, was condemned, like the sophists, to spin out of her own entrails endless ugly webs, which are destroyed as soon as finished, by every slave-girl's broom."—(P. 64.)

This is a characteristic instance of Mr. Kingsley's tendency to dash, out of the repulsions of a partial experience,

into the most extravagant antagonism of judgment. It is conspicuous and undeniable that moral causes have not merely a collateral and accidental, but a direct and essential, influence in the formation of human beliefs; and especially that the religious faith of men is so immediate a product of their affections and conscience, that the logical thought stands to it chiefly in a negative relation, determining its limits and systematizing its form. That self-worship renders all religion impossible; that exclusive confidence in the will breaks it short off at morality; that the overbalance of conscience makes it superstitious, and that of love, fanatical,—are certainties of deepest import, with which the doctrine of the involuntary and irresponsible nature of belief requires to be qualified. For any liberalism which denies these things; which releases us from a holy vigilance as to the secret springs of our faith or doubt; which forbids us ever to see in bigotry or in disbelief a root of conceit and arrogance, however obvious the symptoms may be to every eye,—we feel nothing but contempt. But our *moral* criticism is not, in such instances, visited upon the opinions, as such; it addresses itself to the concomitant temper and natural language of character; and whenever these present the aspect of purity and reverence, it joyfully believes in this good sign, and retires within the pale of equal intellectual discussion. In this view, error is treated as having origin, possibly indeed from moral sources; but possibly also from unmoral; and as never to be referred to the former, in the absence of justifying indications. Mr. Kingsley's doctrine, on the other hand, stops up every opening for charitable construction, and requires us to look on all intellectual differences as the product and the symptoms of a bad heart. On the strength of mere error and mutual contradiction, we are to presume the existence in men of evil passions, which make no sign; to disbelieve the fair look of candour and piety, and exchange our natural trust and admiration for dogmatic pity and suspicion. The moral scepticism implied in this tenet,

—the willingness to accept creed-evidence against character,—is the most melancholy delusion which ecclesiastic unity has introduced into philosophy and life; and we are sorry that Mr. Kingsley, whether in recoil from American free-thinkers, or from entanglement with the "Catholic creeds," has allowed his generous nature to be betrayed into so ungenial a sophistry.

After all, we have somehow the feeling, on laying down this little book, that Mr. Kingsley does not really *mean* its narrowness and fallacies, and is truly himself in all its beauty, truth, and nobleness. The dialectic *is made up;* the deep sentiment is his own. Laughter at his eccentric logic passes into tears at the pathetic faithfulness with which he draws the agonies of doubt beneath the fair surface of English opulence and culture. That society throughout Europe is rapidly suffering a loss of moral strength from the decay of clear and assured faith is but too certain; and no one has a juster discernment of this fact than Mr. Kingsley. He appreciates it in its breadth; he sees it in its detail; he reads its hidden drama beneath the vicissitudes of states and the decadence of churches. If he will but cease to tamper with philosophy, and neither rail at it nor adopt it,—if he will only paint and preach,—if he will simply tell the visions which the living spectacle of the world flings upon his mind, and announce without proving the faiths deepest in his being; he is fitted to be among the prophets of recovery, who may prepare for us a more wholesome future otherwise than by vain reproduction of the past.

VIII.

ALEXANDRIA AND HER SCHOOLS.*

THE intensity of Mr. Kingsley's genius always secures to his productions a certain singleness of impression. The most heterogeneous materials, put into the crucible of his thought and brought to its white heat, flow down into forms perfectly characteristic and distinct. The unity, however, is simply that of his own personality, meeting us again and again;—a phenomenon, let us say, ever delightful to us, and rich in whatever it is best to love and admire; but needing for its full power more elaboration of matter and harmony of plan than he exacts from himself. These Edinburgh Lectures deal with a topic eminently special and rounded off within itself,—with a feature prominent if not unique in the moral physiogomy of the world: nor does any one more truly apprehend its significance than the author; yet, for want of observing its real limits, he has presented it in the midst of confusing accessories, and broken the force of his own interpretation. By the "Alexandrine School" is usually understood the peculiar development of philosophical doctrine, which had its origin from Ammonius Saccas, its chief representative in Plotinus, and its last teacher in Simplicius; extending therefore from the end of the second century through the first quarter of the

* "Alexandria and her Schools." Four Lectures delivered at the Philosophical Institution, Edinburgh. With a Preface. By the Rev. Charles Kingsley, Canon of Middleham, and Rector of Eversley. Cambridge: Macmillan & Co. 1854.—*Prospective Review*. 1854.

sixth. This system is entitled to a separate chapter in the history of mankind. It is a genuine and distinctive product of its time, which you cannot even in imagination transpose. It bears the mingled colours of an old world and a new; and is the twilight dream of thought between the sunny hours of Pagan life and the nightwatches of Christian meditation. It is moreover the one original growth of Ægypto-Hellenic civilization; and its expositor naturally encounters in his task whatever is indigenous to the city of the Ptolemies. To this episode in the story of the human mind Mr. Kingsley, however, has not confined himself. Alexandria is with him "a geographical expression"; her "Schools" are in the plural number, and include the taskwork of critics and grammarians, as well as the efforts of native speculation; and whatever he finds upon the spot, whether put there by external succession, or arising by proper evolution, he passes under hasty review; enclosing his proper subject between a superfluous prefix on the erudition and science of the Ptolemaic era, and an irrelevant supplement on the Mohammedan conquest and religion. The parts have not that natural connection with each other which is needful to any successful sweep over a thousand years in four evening lectures; and though a scenic variety is thus attained, it is the variety of a local handbook rather than of a tale of character and life. Perhaps the range, as well as the selection of the subject was determined for the author by the Institution where the Lectures were delivered; for assuredly the lessons which it is his purpose to impress would have been more distinctly brought out by a less discursive survey.

Mr. Kingsley, it has long been evident, is haunted by a supposed analogy between the Neoplatonic period of the declining empire and the intellectual tendencies of the present age. And certainly if any believer in the metempsychosis chose to identify Margaret Fuller with Hypatia, Emerson with Porphyry, the Poughkeepsie seer with Jamblichus, and Frederick Maurice with Clement, grounds of

recognition would not be wanting. Nor does the parallelism wholly fail in the broad features of the two ages. The decline of ancient faith without mature successor to take the vacant throne; the attempt of metaphysics to fit the soul with a religion; the pretensions of intuition and ecstasy; the sudden birth, from the very eggs of a high-flown spiritualism, of mystagogues and mesmerists, as larvæ are born of butterflies; the growth of world-cities and world-science, with their public libraries and institutes, their botanic and zoölogic gardens, their cheap baths and open parks; the joint diffusion of taste and demoralization, of asceticism and intemperance; the increase of a proletary class amid the growing humanity of society and the laws; the frequency of frightful epidemics; the combination of gigantic enterprises and immense commerce with decay at the heart of private life;—afford undoubtedly a curious group of symptoms common to the Europe of that day and of this. And when Mr. Kingsley justifies, by appeal to the example of the Old World, his despair of any philosophy or theology which substitutes opinions about God for faith in him, and idolizes its own dogma instead of trusting his living guidance, we think his estimate not less seasonable than it is just. For all time the difference *is* infinite between the partizan of beliefs, and the man whose heart is set upon reality,—between one who is lifted up in the pride of his representative notions, and another to whose humility the divine truth is present in person: and whether the old orthodox forms or the newlight images be the better type of thought is a barren controversy, breeding only error and nursing only conceit, till the mood of advocacy be changed; and they are no longer appropriated as *our* ideal scheme, but surrendered to God's realism. Our century also, no less than the third and fourth, requires to be recalled from subjective systems to objective fact; to cease prating of the "Religious Sentiment" in the august hearing of the very God; and, instead of straining the fine metaphysic wing to seek him in the seventh heaven, simply to let him be here

and tell us what to do. In fetching this lesson out of the Alexandrine history, and warning us of the difference between worship of human intellect and reverence for divine truth, Mr. Kingsley renders good service. But when he seems to anticipate for Europe a social dissolution like that of the lower empire, his divination overstrains, we hope, the analogy between the periods which he is accustomed to compare. When the Macedonian conquests had suppressed the nationalities of the East, and Rome had completed their extinction in the west, all local colour faded from the surface of the civilized world; intellectual culture and political organization attained a cosmopolitan diffusion; the special became the provincial, and the provincial passed into the servile. There were but two languages, foreign to the vast majority of Roman subjects, in which thought and passion could gain audience; all others, though they might flow more naturally to the lips, were abandoned to the chaffering of the market, the games of children, and the altercations of slaves. The favoured languages themselves suffered by their own privilege, and bore testimony to their own degeneration. The Latin, which now gave the world its laws, could not forget the Forum, and had in it the flavour of a pride and virtue that were gone. The Greek, now forced to do the ingenious and polite for all mankind, had its bloom and glory in an autochthonic literature, breathing a faith, and fresh from a life which the sickened age could no longer understand. All that was indigenous and characteristic was smoothed away; and over the wooded uplands and sequestered meadows of history, the paved roads of universal empire pushed their level way. The whole problem of the scholar was to extract something for men in general out of what was meant for Greeks alone; to wipe out the Hellenic, or translate it into the human; and eliminate from the formulas of Attic thought every term that did not admit of indefinite expansion. Those only who have a life of their own can really set themselves to appreciate the life

of another people: the vapid lot of the Alexandrines, without country, without ancestry, enabled them, neither by analogy nor by antithesis of pride and admiration, to understand the traditions and vicissitudes of the Athenian commonwealth. To accommodate the contents of a unique literature to the spirit of a characterless civilization was the function of the philosophers of the Nile. As all the worships of mankind had been connected with the locality and race, the absorption of States was the dying out of religions: divinities, once venerable in their native abodes, were pensioned off into the Pantheon; and the reconciled East and West met in Rome to exchange compliments and gods. To save a comprehensive religion out of the wreck of perishing mythologies is a hopeless attempt: reverence, wounded in the concrete, cannot be restored in the abstract; and piety, accustomed to warm colours and concentrated air, turns pale and dies in the ether and its cold light. It is not surprising that the effort should fail to turn a world-wide tyranny to account for the creation of a universal faith, and to make men who had unlearnt their worships one by one, believe them all again, as soon as they were regimented into system. The cosmopolitanism of modern times is altogether different. Instead of being the residuary effect from the negation of prior faiths, it arises from the positive presence, to begin with, of a universal faith. It is essentially a *religious* feeling, acknowledging the common law and common kindred of the human race, in all the highest relations. It is encouraged, no doubt, as in the Roman period, by the extension of mercantile transactions and facilities of intercourse; and from the mixture of trading interest with evangelic sentiment, many delusive dreams of unity and peace, and much stupid indifference to municipal, ethnological, and political distinctions cannot fail to arise. But with all this,—with a catholic religion, a terrestrial commerce, and our share in the speculative philosophy whose very aim it is to grasp the all of things,—it is impossible for the wide synoptic

tendency to obtain exclusive dominance over us, with no other check than individual self-love or passion. The past providence of God has taken care of this. The mere co-existence of so many cultivated languages, each with a literature of its own, preserves securely the rich variety of the world's life, and treasures up, for the hour of reassertion, whatever noble heritage of race and history a transient over-balance of force may have neutralized. Nor is our age, as compared with its predecessors, chargeable with disregard, in its arrangements and aims, of the historical data of European society. The mimicry of "classical" antiquity, and the propagation of paper "constitutions," which satisfied the pedantic aspirations of reform in the last century, are laughed at in this; and it is the violence done to *nationalities* that revolutionary movements everywhere resent, and even diplomacy is learning to regret. With the unity of human nature given in our religion, and the right of various development enforced on us by the necessity of history, we hold in happy balance, as it seems to us, the two opposite conditions, of which the Neoplatonic age had lost the latter and vainly sought to find the former. Persons no doubt there are, and particular schools amongst us, who may run again the morbid course of Alexandrine thought; but we believe there is health in the heart of European nations to pass through such pestilent hours as they may bring.

Whatever may be our author's forebodings as to the future of Europe, he treats with just disdain the pleas of selfishness and tyranny, and manfully enforces the duties of free States, in the crisis brought on by Russian encroachment:—

"Europe needs a holier and more spiritual, and therefore a stronger union, than can be given by armed neutralities, and the so-called cause of order. She needs such a bond as in the Elizabethan age united the free States of Europe against the Anarch of Spain, and delivered the western nations from a rising world-tyranny, which promised to be even more hideous than that elder one of Rome. If, as then, England shall pro-

claim herself the champion of freedom by acts, and not by words and paper, she may, as she did then, defy the rulers of the darkness of this world, for the God of light will be with her. But, as yet, it is impossible to look without sad forebodings upon the destiny of a war, begun upon the express understanding that evil shall be left triumphant throughout Europe, wheresoever that evil does not seem, to our own selfish short-sightedness, to threaten us with immediate danger; with promises, that under the hollow name of the Cause of Order,—and that promise made by a revolutionary Anarch,—the wrongs of Italy, Hungary, Poland, Sweden, shall remain unredressed, and that Prussia and Austria, two tyrannies, the one far more false and hypocritical than the other, even more rotten than that of Turkey, shall, if they will but observe a hollow and uncertain neutrality (for who can trust the liar and the oppressor?) be allowed not only to keep their ill-gotten spoils, but even now to play into the hands of our foe, by guarding his Polish frontier for him, and keeping down the victims of his cruelty, under pretence of keeping down those of their own. . . . . We shall not escape our duty by inventing to ourselves some other duty, and calling it 'order.' Elizabeth did so at first. She tried to keep the peace with Spain; she shrank from injuring the cause of order (then a nobler one than now, because it was the cause of loyalty, and not merely of mammon), by assisting the Scotch and the Netherlanders: but her duty was forced upon her; and she did it at last cheerfully, boldly, utterly, like a hero; she put herself at the head of the battle for the freedom of the world, and she conquered, for God was with her; and so that seemingly most fearful of all England's perils, when the real meaning of it was seen, and God's will in it obeyed manfully, became the foundation of England's naval and colonial empire, and laid the foundation of all her future glories. So it was then, so it is now; so it will be forever: he who seeks to save his life will lose it; he who willingly throws away his life for the cause of mankind, which is the cause of God, the Father of mankind, he shall save it, and be rewarded a hundred-fold. That God may grant us, the children of the Elizabethan heroes, all wisdom to see our duty, and courage to do it, even to the death, should be our earnest prayer. . . . . It is reported that our rulers have said that English diplomacy can no longer recognize 'nationalities,' but only existing 'governments.'

God grant that they may see in time that the assertion of national life, as a spiritual and indefeasible existence, was for centuries the central idea of English policy; the idea by faith in which she delivered first herself, and then the Protestant nations of the Continent, successively from the yokes of Rome, of Spain, of France, and that they may reassert that most English of all truths again, let the apparent cost be what it may."—*Preface*, p. xviii.

Before treating of the "physical" and "metaphysical" schools of Alexandria, Mr. Kingsley explains the origin and meaning of these two terms: "physical" denoting that which "is born" and grows (φύεται), or, the phenomenal; "metaphysical," that of which we learn to think *after* we think of nature; the supernatural ground of all phenomena, which never begins and ends, but always *is*. By a *physical* school, then, we should understand one which treats of phenomena; by a *metaphysical*, one which treats of real or fundamental being. Mr. Kingsley, however, with one of his strange and sudden twists, pronounces all Alexandria one physical school. Why? Not because it engaged itself in the *study* of phenomena, but because the city and its history *constitute* a phenomenon; and he no less claims it as a *metaphysical* school, on the counter-ground, that it held human beings with imperishable elements and spiritual relations. Assuredly, not Alexandria alone, but any smallest fact or object in this universe, being an evolution in time out of that which is eternal, presents *material* for both physical and metaphysical study; but this is nothing to the point; and is as if, when we want to know what the College of Physicians thinks of asthma, you were to give us the name of a wheezy doctor. The digressions into which our author starts off in this wild illogical way are always eloquent and often deep and beautiful; but a quieter command of coherent thought would awaken stronger trust; and it is hardly well that our guide across a great tract of time should be so ready to plunge off into the forest to chase a bird, or dart aside over the prairie just to ride into the wind.

We have said that it might have been more judicious in our author to pass without notice the labours of the Ptolemaic savants, and go at once to the single original product of Alexandrine culture, the system of Plotinus and his successors. With this the researches and instructions of the Museum had nothing to do. In the lecture-rooms of that great literary and scientific institute various knowledge was taught; the stores of the past were gathered up and systematized; mathematical and astronomical science was improved; what genius had created industry criticized: but no great work relieved the barrenness of the time. All the schools of Greek doctrine—Pythagorean, Academic, Aristotelian, etc.—had their separate representatives, who expounded the systems as they had been handed down; but no fresh philosophic impulse originated new speculation or fused and recast the old. Neoplatonism was not only a later, but a wholly independent product, in which the patronage of the palace and the institute can claim no share. Mr. Kingsley has not clearly distinguished historical juxtaposition from causal connection, and has presented the pre-Christian erudition and the post-Christian metaphysics in a continuity of development which did not belong to them. But he so finely exhibits in its essence the sterility of the early artificial school, and traces it so justly to blind reverence for the letter rather than the spirit of ancient wisdom, that we care not to criticize his plan:—

"This, if you will consider, is the true meaning of that great command, 'Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long in the land.' On reverence for the authority of by-gone generations depends the permanence of every form of thought or belief, as much as of all social, national, and family life; but on reverence of the spirit, not merely of the letter; of the methods of our ancestors, not merely of their conclusions. Ay, and we shall not be able to preserve their conclusions, not even to understand them; they will die away on our lips into skeleton notions and soulless phrases, unless we see that the greatness

of the mighty dead has always consisted in this, that they were seekers, improvers, inventors, endued with that divine power and right of discovery which has been bestowed on us, even as on them; unless we become such men as they were, and go on to cultivate and develop the precious heritage which they have bequeathed to us, instead of hiding their talent in a napkin and burying it in the earth; making their greatness an excuse for our own littleness, their industry for our laziness, their faith for our despair; and prating about the old paths, while we forget that paths were made that men might walk in them, and not stand still, and try in vain to stop the way.

"It may be said certainly, as an excuse for these Alexandrian Greeks, that they were a people in a state of old age and decay; and that they only exhibited the common and natural faults of old age. For as with individuals, so with races, nations, societies, schools of thought; youth is the time of free fancy and poetry; manhood, of calm and strong induction; old age, of deduction, when men settle down upon their lees, and content themselves with reaffirming and verifying the conclusions of their earlier years, and too often, alas! with denying and anathematizing all conclusions which have been arrived at since their own meridian. It is sad; but it is patent and common. It is sad to think that the day may come to each of us, when we shall have ceased to hope for discovery and for progress; when a thing will seem *à priori* false to us, simply because it is new; and we shall say querulously to the Divine Light which lightens every man who comes into the world, 'Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further. Thou hast taught men enough; yea, rather, thou has exhausted thine own infinitude, and hast no more to teach them.' Surely such a temper is to be fought against, prayed against, both in ourselves and in the generation in which we live. Surely there is no reason why such a temper should overtake old age. There may be reason enough, 'in the nature of things.' For that which is of nature is born only to decay and die. But in man there is more than dying nature; there is spirit, and a capability of spiritual and everlasting life, which renews its youth like the eagle's, and goes on from strength to strength, and which, if it have its autumns and its winters, has no less its ever-recurring springs and summers; if it has its Sabbaths, finds in them only rest and refreshment for coming labour. And why not in nations, societies, scientific

schools? These too are not merely natural; they are spiritual, and are only living and healthy in as far as they are in harmony with spiritual, unseen, and everlasting laws of God. May not they, too, have a capability of everlasting life, as long as they obey those laws in faith, and patience, and humility? We cannot deny the analogy between the individual man and these societies of men. We cannot at least deny the analogy between them in growth, decay, and death. May we not have hope that it holds good also for that which can never die; and that if they do die, as this old Greek society did, it is by no brute natural necessity, but by their own unfaithfulness to that which they knew, to that which they ought to have known? It is always more hopeful, always, as I think, more philosophic, to throw the blame of failure on man, on our own selves, rather than on God and the perfect law of his universe. At least, let us be sure for ourselves that such an old age as befell this Greek society, as befalls many a man now-a-days, need not be our lot. Let us be sure that earth shows no fairer sight than the old man, whose worn-out brain and nerves make it painful, and perhaps impossible, to produce fresh thought himself; but who can yet welcome smilingly and joyfully the fresh thoughts of others; who keeps unwearied his faith in God's government of the universe, in God's continual education of the human race; who draws around him the young and the sanguine, not merely to check their rashness by his wise cautions, but to inspirit their sloth by the memories of his own past victories; who hands over, without envy or repining, the lamp of truth to younger runners than himself, and sits contented by, bidding the new generation God-speed along the paths untrodden by him, but seen afar off by faith. A few such old persons have I seen, both men and women; in whom the young heart beat pure and fresh, beneath the cautious and practised brain of age, and grey hairs, which were indeed a crown of glory. A few such have I seen; and from them I seemed to learn what was the likeness of our Father who is in heaven. To such an old age may he bring you and me, and all for whom we are bound to pray."—Pp. 33-37.

The sketch of the proper Alexandrine philosophy given in these Lectures is too slight to admit of either criticism or completion. The few lines and points that are jotted

down may serve, perhaps, as indicative memoranda to those who know the ground; but so indistinct a picture can neither be filled in with supplementary features to make it true, nor exactly condemned as intrinsically false. In fact, Mr. Kingsley's interest in the Neoplatonic system arises not from anything special to it and discriminating it from all other schemes of doctrine, but from a character which it has in common with most of the great Greek and modern German schools, namely, its proper *realism*, or assumption of something to be known behind phenomena and their laws. He resents the indignity put upon metaphysic by Locke, in reducing it from a science of real being to a classification of mental appearances; and perceives, with sensitive religious instinct, that if only phenomena can be known, God, who is no phenomenon, must be inapprehensible by the human mind. In his antipathy to this notion, he welcomes as an ally every system at marked variance with it; and exaggerates the relationships between doctrines which have little in common beyond their commencement from an ontological ground. He puts together, as if they belonged to the same philosophical group, Philo the Jew, Numenius the Pythagorean, Plotinus the Platonist; and attributes to the first especially an influence over the speculations of the last which it is quite gratuitous to assume. To say that "the father of New Platonism was Philo the Jew" (p. 79), and that "from the time of Philo, the deepest thought of the heathen world began to flow in a theological channel" (p. 93), is to give a totally false impression of the order of action and reaction between the Judaic and the Hellenic thought. Indeed the latter of these assertions is essentially erroneous even in relation to the external fact. No change towards a more theologic character marked the course of philosophy till the appearance of Ammonius—the θεοδίδαχτος, as he was called—at the end of the second century; the religious sentiment of Epictetus belonging to the doctrine of the Porch; and that of Numenius to the Pythagorean scheme. Nor is there

any reason to believe that the New Platonism would have been materially different if Philo had never lived. It is possible indeed that Plotinus, whose curiosity respecting Oriental notions emboldened him to share the dangers of Gordian's Persian expedition, may have referred to Philo's writings as a source of Jewish knowledge, and felt a congenial interest in his doctrines of the absolute as distinguished from the rational Deity, and of the contemplative union of the soul with the divine nature. But even where the resemblance is least doubtful, plagiarism, or even derivation of the later from the earlier, is not to be presumed. The condition of the world rendered it inevitable that the Hellenic thought should penetrate and win the Hebrew; impossible that the Hebrew should at all considerably influence the Hellenic, except indeed within the Christian Church, the appointed providential medium for their conjunction and reconciliation. The East, twice subjugated by the West, had surrendered to its culture not less than to its arms, and could negotiate on no equal terms with the languages of Alexander and Pompey. The Greek and Roman literature, apart from any higher claim, was the literature of conquerors, and gave the law to education, to taste, to manners, to art. To be at cross purposes with it was to be disqualified for polished society. The schools of philosophy and rhetoric which trained the youth and interested the leisure of the wealthy and accomplished classes, kept alive the admiration of Athenian models, and were wholly engaged in expounding the wisdom and copying the intellectual discipline of the city of the Sophists. Nor was any lesson more readily communicated by Greek egotism to Roman pride, than the contempt for "barbarian" literature; and if some exception must be made on behalf of Magian, Indian, and Egyptian doctrines, which enjoyed the repute of a mysterious antiquity, and of having passed under the notice of Herodotus and Plato, no such romantic attraction rescued from contempt the intellectual pretensions of the Hebrew people. The Platon-

izing system of Philo only shows how completely the dominant civilization carried all before it, and found even the impenetrable substance of Jewish belief not proof against its infiltration. Had the philosophical impulse been strong enough in him, as it was in Spinoza, to induce apostasy and deliver him over from the synagogue to the academy, he might have affected the future development of doctrine. But he has no dialectic genius; no disposition to compromise his nationality; only the bad taste to dress up Moses in the philosophic cloak, and hang the white sheet on a many-coloured history that it may play the part of ghostly allegory. His appropriation of Greek ideas to the honour of Hebrew theology is precisely the use of them which would most certainly repel the fastidiousness of Gentile scholars, and limit his influence to his compatriots. We believe, therefore, that the New Platonism of Ammonius and Plotinus was of pure Hellenic descent; and arose naturally from the confluence of Ionic and Doric elements of thought at a time when there was nothing to maintain their distinction, and when the loss or degradation of living *moral* activities, whether in the family or the state, drove the soul upon mystical methods of self-reconciling union with the absolutely good. This Alexandrine school was the last effort of a culture purely Greek to satisfy out of its own resources the altered demands of the human mind, and stop the encroachment of Eastern barbarism and superstition. For this purpose all the appliances of Hellenic wisdom were brought together and exhausted in the comprehensive genius of Plotinus; but nothing was touched that lay beyond; the very problem being to show that the Western schools were equal to the utmost strain that could be put upon a system of philosophy and religion. This jealous Greek exclusiveness is indeed the key to the whole history of Neoplatonism; and the tendency of the French eclectics on the one hand, and of Mr. Maurice and his disciples on the other, to run its genealogy into the lines of Jewish and Christian development, only confuses the apprehension of the period.

If on historical grounds we object to the slurring together of these two elements, we still more decidedly protest, in the interests of philosophical criticism, against the attempt to harmonize them, and apply them both, indifferently, to the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures. Mr. Kingsley approves of Philo's procedure in forcing the Platonic doctrine of εἴδη on the Mosaic account of the creation; adopting, we presume, Mr. Maurice's suggestion, that the first chapter of Genesis describes the origin of archetypal *kinds*, and the second the creation of concrete *individuals;* and the Divine guide and teacher of Israel he brings under the same essential category with the demon of Socrates. We hold it to be quite illegitimate, thus to try a set of Athenian keys to unlock the Arcana of the Israelitish temple. The Jewish Theism and the Greek Pantheism are radically distinct in their genesis and whole development; even their passages of apparent analogy are but false parallelisms; and whatever reconciliation they may have, in objective truth fully understood, can only come out at the end, and must not be presupposed at the beginning of their career. The old Testament literature was anterior to even the incipient approximation between the two directions of thought; and interpreters who infuse into it Platonic ideas to take out its stains, do but bleach away the rich colours of its native life, and destroy one of the most picturesque and instructive contrasts in the history of the human race. Mr. Kingsley, approving of Philo's theosophy, condemns his allegorizing, as dissipating in vapourous piety the concrete and passionate humanities of the Hebrew tradition. But the two things are inseparable from each other. If you will have Moses philosophize about εἴδη, you cannot leave Samson making crazy riddles about a beehive in a dead lion. The whole method of this exegetical school is spurious and mischievous. The least intrusion of metaphysical interest in the work of interpretation is an impertinence; and spoils that pure historical sympathy which, when directed by adequate learning, is

the proper organ of intelligence with regard to the monuments of the past.

Mr. Kingsley is happier in drawing the contrast than in giving the derivation of the Christian and Pagan schools of Alexandria. He says most justly, that, while they both aim to find a way of reunion between the divine nature and the human, the Christian represents God as stooping to man, while the Pagan professes to explain how the soul of man may rise to God.

"There is a vast gulf between the Christian and the Heathen schools, which when any man had overleaped, the whole problem of the universe was from that moment inverted. With Plotinus and his school, man is seeking for God; with Clemens and his, God is seeking for man. With the former, God is passive, and man active; with the latter, God is active, man is passive,—passive, that is, in so far as his business is to listen when he is spoken to, to look at the light which is unveiled to him, to submit himself to the inward laws which he feels reproving and checking him at every turn, as Socrates was reproved and checked by his inward demon. Whether of these two theorems gives the higher conception, either of the Divine Being, or of man, I leave it for you to judge. To those old Alexandrian Christians, a Being who was not seeking after every single creature, and trying to raise him, could not be a Being of absolute righteousness, power, love; could not be a Being worthy of respect or admiration, even of philosophic speculation. Human righteousness and love flows forth disinterestedly to all around it, however unconscious, however unworthy they may be; human power associated with goodness, seeks for objects which it may raise and benefit by that power. We must confess this, with the Christian schools, or, with the Heathen schools, we must allow another theory which brought them into awful depths; which may bring any generation which holds it into the same depths. If Clemens had asked the Neoplatonists: 'You believe, Plotinus, in an absolutely good Being. Do you believe that it desires to shed forth its goodness on all?' 'Of course,' they would have answered, 'on those who seek for it, on the philosopher.' 'But not, it seems, Plotinus, on the herd, the brutal ignorant

mass, wallowing in those foul crimes above which you have risen?' And at that question there would have been not a little hesitation. These brutes in human form, these souls wallowing in earthly mire, could hardly, in the Neoplatonists' eyes, be objects of the Divine desire. 'Then this absolute Good, you say, Plotinus, has no relation with them, no care to raise them. In fact, it cannot raise them, because they have nothing in common with it. Is that your notion? And the Neoplatonists would have, on the whole, allowed that argument. And if Clemens had answered, that such was not his notion of goodness, or of a good Being, and that therefore the goodness of their absolute Good, careless of the degradation and misery around it, must be something very different from his notions of human goodness; the Neoplatonists would have answered—indeed, they did answer—'After all, why not? Why should the absolute goodness be like our human goodness?' This is Plotinus's own belief. It is a question with him, it was still more a question with those who came after him, whether virtues could be predicated of the Divine nature; courage, for instance, of one who had nothing to fear; self-restraint of one who had nothing to desire? And thus by setting up a different standard of morality for the Divine and for the human, Plotinus gradually arrives at the conclusion that virtue is not the end, but the means; not the Divine nature itself as the Christian schools held, but only the purgative process by which man was to ascend into heaven, and which was necessary to arrive at that nature—that nature itself being—what?"—P. 100.

This will be found to be the great fundamental difference between Monism and Monotheism,—between the metaphysic evolution of the universe from one *principle*, and moral recognition in it and beyond it of one *God*. The latter doctrine retains without fear the human analogy in its conception of the Divine nature, and places there whatever is venerable and holy in character. The former, often doubting whether its Deity really *thinks*, can never persuade itself that he *feels*. The source of all can be recipient of nothing; and he abides behind the impressions which he only gives. Hence not only the doctrine of the

impassibility of God, but, in mischievous reaction from that doctrine on human morality, the notion that the extinction of feeling, the absorption of the sensitive faculties in the contemplative, constitutes the true approach to God. In nothing does the contrast of this idea with the Christian appear more striking than in its application to the theory of worship. In the Neoplatonic treatise De Mysteriis, belonging to the time of Jamblichus, the question is raised, how, if the gods are impassible, can they be accessible to prayer. The answer,—though we have heard it from other than Pagan lips,—is intensely heathen: "It is not that the gods descend to the soul of the suppliant, but that he lifts his soul to them. Nor is it change of place only that must be denied to them; there is no change of feeling in relation to the worshipper; for they are unsusceptible of joy or grief, of anger or love. Do we speak sometimes of their anger? we only mean that the soul withdraws from them; of their propitiation? we mean, that the soul draws nigh. Prayer is simply a means of rendering one's self like the gods; whatever resembles them has them present in essence." Let this be compared with the passage, "If any man love me, he will keep my words; and *my Father will love him*, and we will *come unto him, and make our abode with him*;"—and the difference between the genius of Heathen theosophy and Christian faith is exhibited in its very essence. We have often thought that the doctrine of the incarnation may have been an indispensable means of guarding the church from this most pestilent delusion of philosophy,—that to be divine, a nature must not feel. So long as the voluntary adoption of a human life by the Divine Logos is the object of affectionate faith, the disciple is at least secure against the doubt whether there can be care and tenderness for him in heaven. He is not terrified by the infinitely arduous problem of finding by his own devices One who makes no offer to meet him, who is deaf to his entreaties and unmoved by his utmost passion of aspiration. Be the errors

involved in his theology what they may, they are at least compatible with trust and devout affection.

With these desultory remarks on a desultory book we must content ourselves for the present; not without a hope of some time returning, under more systematic guidance, to the study of a phenomenon singularly instructive to our own age. The reactionary movement of the third century towards philosophical heathenism, presents many features of resemblance to the fanaticisms of the present time. And when Porphyry tells us of the boundless influence of Plotinus over the educated and fashionable circles in Rome; of the religious veneration in which the traditions and words of the Athenian sages were held; of the consecration of their birthdays by special liturgies and offerings; of the distinguished citizens who laid down their offices and sold their property in devotion to the resuscitated faith; of the noble ladies who retired from society and took their vows to the philosophic inspiration,—it is impossible not to be reminded of a modern revival of elder faith, appealing to the same historic reverence, embodying the same contempt of partial sects, and making the same boast of Catholic equivalence to all separate wisdoms. We recommend Mr. Kingsley's little book to all who would know how suggestive are the phenomena of that curious time.

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IX.

PROFESSIONAL RELIGION.*

REVIEWS, like railway-carriages, must sometimes bring honest men and knaves together. Between the respectable literature represented by the four last titles on this list and the fellow-traveller in the first seat there is nothing in common, except the destination to which we propose to convey them. However various their purposes and merits, the point at which they all alight is the same; and presents a pretty wide view over the ecclesiastical landscape of the hour. Each of these books deals with the officials of the altar and the pulpit, — Romanist, Anglican, or Nonconformist; and from the combined impression of them all arises a picture tolerably distinct, in spite of its mixed effects, of the administered or professional religion of the present age.

The "Confessions," however, throw no light whatever on the character of the Catholic clergy, but only on the malig-

* "The Confessions of a Catholic Priest." London: Chapman, 1858.

"Scenes from Clerical Life." By George Eliot. Two vols. Edinburgh and London: Blackwood, 1858.

"Barchester Towers." By Anthony Trollope. Three vols. London: Longmans, 1857.

"The Life and Correspondence of John Foster." Edited by J. E. Ryland, A.M.; with Notices of Mr. Foster as a Preacher and a Companion," by John Shephard. Two vols. London: Bohn, 1852.

"Preachers and Preaching." By Henry Christmas, M.A., F.R.S., &c. London: William Lay, 1858.—*National Review*, October, 1858.

nant *animus* with which they may be regarded. If, indeed, the autobiographical pretensions of the book were veracious, its pages would make us acquainted with *one* "Priest" not a shade better than the dark fancies of Exeter Hall, only vain enough to parade his wickedness, and stupid enough to make it simply tiresome or revolting. And could we further rely on the word of such a reporter, we should have to believe that the Parisian priests in general are even more shameless hypocrites and profligates than himself, and are accustomed to pass straight from their holiest offices into ribald jests and atheistic blasphemies. But what credence, nay, what hearing in any honest court, can be given to an anonymous reviler, who at the very moment of assuming the *rôle* of offended virtue was, by his own admission, celebrating mass for temporary hire, with the full consciousness of broken vows and utter unbelief? The very attempt to procure reception for such statements, without the open voucher of the witness's name, appears to us a heinous offence against literary morals. We know of only one thing worse, viz., that the alleged witness should be not nameless simply, but *fictitious;* invented to confer the semblance of fact on the suspicions of a malign imagination. Yet such a personage, the internal evidence inclines us to fear (and *external* there is none, the "Editor" being anonymous like the "Author," and of indistinguishable identity), this Hungarian "Catholic Priest" must be. His story, from the moment of his exchanging the vows of the lover for those of the priest, to his adulterous passion and suicide at last, is without unity or verisimilitude. His descriptions have no touch of reality; his personages, no life; his reflections, no sincerity of actual experience. How far, indeed, a nature unhinged and demoralized may be brought to pass through life without a clue of continuous tendency, however low, and with only hazy perceptions of people and things, it is difficult to say. But we hardly think that any real career could be relaxed in its delineation to such shapelessness as this. We lay no stress, therefore, on the statements of our

pretended "exile." We do not believe in the systematic hypocrisy and secret flagitiousness of Paris priests or any other order of Christian clergy, but take them to be neither less nor more sincere than other men. We refer to the sickly rhapsodist who brings the charge, partly in protest against such anonymous indictments, partly in evidence of the appetite there is for rumour damaging to the sacred class.

It is no wonder that clerical character should be a favourite topic in the literature of domestic and social fiction. The sitter for portraiture is everywhere: he sits in public, so that every one can read the likeness; and his presence throws off daily photographs in every variety of light. The lawyer and the doctor are indeed almost equally ubiquitous; but people without parchments know nothing of the one, and the healthy have only bowing acquaintance with the other. The parson, be his nature ever so retiring, leaves a distincter and wider impression. He is not only seen, but heard; and on the tones of his voice his personality flows forth, reporting and repeating in others the life or death within himself. Genially or querulously we all criticize him, and take our measure of him. There are few who do not ponder, or at least feel, the two lives apparently co-existing in him,—that which prays in the church, and that which gossips at the table; the solemn heart that beats under the cassock, and the organ of flesh and blood that throbs in the world's hot race. He is the visible representative of this mystery to all, to some perhaps its true interpreter; and while shrewd people of course can believe only in his secular side, and young reverence only in the spiritual, observers with any depth as well as tenderness of eye see their own reflection in them both. In one way or other he is the object of a universal feeling; even those whose pride it is to care nothing for him being pleased to see him treated with indifference. The novelist has but to set him up, and a whole host of ready-made sympathies and antipathies are at hand to give interest to the figure. If in

passing a print-shop you saw in the window a picture of your neighbour or your rival, you would stop to look at it. And on the same principle, the tale-writer who would bring a crowd of faces before his glass naturally sets an image there, friendly or frightful in the sight of all.

To this must be added, without the least disparagement of such artists as Mr. Eliot and Mr. Trollope, that where there is a broad groundwork of class-characteristics, the delineation is sure of a certain grade of success on easy terms. Costume in portraiture is a great help to the recognition of likeness; and it needs but an individual trait or two, added on to a given and familiar kind of character, in order to leave a sufficiently concrete impression. And no one can deny that the class *is* strongly marked by something far deeper than "the cloth." In fact, there is a tempting facility about ecclesiastical natural history most seductive to the observer who is eager for specimens to fill his cabinet of character. The genera of the order *Clerus* are peculiarly distinct:—the Catholic priest, with his alien sympathies, his mediæval training, his skill in the archæology of Art, his solitary life, his meek absolutism;—the Episcopalian clergyman, insular and national, steeped to the lips in the academic tincture of Oxford or Cambridge, presumed to be a gentleman without the trouble of proving it, and sure to be the scholar rather than the divine;—the Nonconformist minister, *bourgeois* in his manners, American in his politics, cosmopolitan in his philanthropy, too little of a Heathen to be a great scholar, and too polemic a Christian to be ill-equipped as a special theologian,—with a weakness for eloquence, a dependence on popularity, and a contempt for quiet forms of strength. Nor are the *species* under each of these heads hard to discriminate. No one, for instance, could be five minutes in the presence of Dr. Pusey, Dean Close, and Bishop Thirlwall, and suppose them churchmen of the same complexion. And even further down still, High-churchism is conspicuously different, according as it is Catholic or English, springing

from sacramental doctrine or from conservative reverence for the social hierarchy; Low-churchism again, according as it means a zeal for the Genevan type of dogma, with indifference to ritual and insensibility to art, or simply expresses the infinite need to the human soul of a grace and communion open only to faith; and Broad-churchism, according as it is critical and rationalistic in its basis, or verges to the Christian Gnosticism of Lincoln's Inn Chapel, or is merely liberal, ethical, and whiggish. So well determined is the moral physiognomy of all these, that they are not less attractive to the novelist than the face of Lord Brougham and the person of Lord John Russell to the caricaturist. To some of their parochial varieties we are introduced in the "Scenes from Clerical Life"; whilst "Barchester Towers" never quits the precincts of the Cathedral, presents us to City society, and domesticates our fancy with the dignified clergy of the Deanery and the Close.

It is foreign to our purpose formally to criticize these productions as works of art. But in gratitude for pleasant hours spent over them, a word is due to their respective merits. Mr. Eliot's strength lies in the conception of female character; and each of his three tales is but a framework for the setting of a woman's portrait. The second of these,—an Italian orphan, adopted by a stately English house, and, in spite of its sedative world of kindly decorum and opulent trifling, asserting her heritage of music and of passion, is original and vividly wrought out. The effect in this instance depends on the surprises of so unique a combination, nursing in the still air of country gentility wild storms of love, revenge, and sorrow. In the other cases the pathos rather arises from the picture being not exceptional, but representative. The native grace and ladyhood of the poor curate's wife, her overplied strength worn down before his stupid eyes by his children and the impossible problems of his house, her genius for self-sacrificing contrivance and achievement, her all-harmonizing

tact and love bringing leaf and blossom of life out of sordid conditions, and the early sundering of so fine a fibre under so great a strain,—are drawn with tender truth, and raise the sadder sighs because in a hundred churches every Sunday that gentle lady kneels. The third picture opens the interior of a more afflicted home; where, by brutal abuse, a hard-headed, hard-drinking country lawyer drives his noble, trustful, childless wife to secret intoxication. In a crisis of agony, turned out of her home, she falls under the influence of an evangelical clergyman, who himself had passed through an act of repentance into rare self-devotion; and who, in spite of local resistance, led by her husband, is quietly conquering the heart of the place. It is only in this third tale that we have any *interior* "scene of clerical life," with events really hinging upon its spring of character. In the first story it is the outward lot, not the inward personality, of the curate, that spreads the stage for the drama; and in the second, it is a mere accident that there is any clergyman at all. The title of the book is thus far a little misleading, the principal character-painting being thrown upon other personages than the clerical agents in the scene.

With Mr. Trollope's clever novel it is quite otherwise. His humour delights in studies of ecclesiastical human nature. The snug dwellings, with trim gardens, that cluster within hearing of palace-rookeries and cathedral-bells, show him their interior as if made of glass. True, we miss in him any very deep and subtle penetration to the springs of feeling, any attempt to construct a character from within by the working of its living essence. But he well understands the artificial affections, of taste and antipathy, formed by the mingling of self with religion,—whether the gross self of mere personal interest and desire, or the refined self of cultivated intellect, tact, and admiration. The superciliousness of Anglican scorn, the meanness of Evangelical spite, the easy-going goodness of the old-school clergyman, kept right amid party storms by the gentlemanly moderation of

a Christian mind, are forcibly impersonated. And the very slightness of the plot,—all turning upon the appointment of a new Dean and a new Warden to a hospital,—serves to give point to the satire. The scale and quality of clerical life receive significant illustration from the mere fact that you are carried through three volumes of humour, excitement, and intrigue about these golden apples of the palace-orchard.

Indeed, the one deep impression which we carry away from all these books is, that the order of men of which such things can be plausibly written must have, and deserve to have, but very feeble hold of the world. Nor is there any thing to relieve that impression in the glimpses into Nonconformist life opened by such biographies as that of Foster. Traces are found there also of embarrassed and waning professional power; of indeterminate and therefore uneasy relations between people and pastor; of conditions imposed which are repulsive to ministers of large culture and scrupulous sincerity; of a certain style and standard of religious pretension false to men's real reverence and out of harmony with the best facts of life; and of the comparative rarity with which the pulpit rises above its heavy reputation. Into the cause of this last fact Mr. Christmas inquires, in his pleasant little volume on "Preachers and Preaching"; without, however, any appreciable result beyond a personal estimate (sensible enough) of a few favourite Christian orators. For, with all his zeal to effect an improvement, he denies the inferiority of the best modern sermons to those of the most honoured ages of Christendom, and doubts whether a Basil or a Chrysostom would especially draw a London congregation. He does not admit that *the average* is lowered, or that, on the whole, church and chapel were ever taught by a more able and earnest set of men. He reminds us that the complaint of dulness is not new; that to those who have no inward preparedness, spiritual addresses speak in vain; that in every age the number was probably small, in comparison with the careless world out-

side, that thronged the pavement round the pulpit, and made it here and there a power and a name. If this be so,—if the grievance be of so old a date and such obstinate persistence,—how are we to meet it? What does our author counsel should be done? Choose your text with judgment: succinctly explain it in your exordium: clench it in your peroration: practise action before the glass: study punctuation and emphasis: give the hearers intervals to cough. Discreet advice, perhaps; but a little out of proportion, surely, to the estimated difficulty to be overcome. The evil lies, you say, in the permanent sluggishness of human nature; and you prescribe nice doses of rhetorical breath. Your frigate is becalmed: send for the bellows to fill her main-sheet! The proposal of so petty a remedy in so great a case sounds to us more dreary than the dullest sermon. Fancy Isaiah "declaiming before the glass," or St. Stephen "attending to his punctuation." Not that we undervalue the personal gifts of pure speech and irreproachable utterance. By all means let the human organ of the Divine Spirit have what perfection it can. But in clearing away instrumental blemishes, let not the preacher be seduced into the paramount disqualification of all,—of setting his office before him as *an Art*, in which he plies his own dexterity and criticizes his own performance. If now, as of old and always, the Power of the Spirit declines to pass upon the world except through souls that can forget themselves and yield their faculties as the vehicle of Higher Will,—then, wherever you create the attitude of self-attention, you cancel the capacity for Christian preaching, and substitute the dead for the living Word. Leave it, we entreat you, to actors, whose business it is *to represent* and not *to be*,—to set their laugh to music, and accentuate the "crescendo" and "diminuendo" of their grief: but let the chief of all realities remain a first-hand simplicity. If it hurts the natural feeling of every sincere spectator to see an act of prayer put upon the stage, commit not the same offence conversely by putting the stage beneath the acts of

public prayer and forgetting the difference between the pulpit and "the boards." No true emotion bears tutoring as to its natural language: it becomes simulated in very act. The angry girl who cries and sobs "to pattern,"—the parting friends that should do their embraces "before the glass,"—the mourner's lament that should rehearse itself beforehand,—would disgust us with their unreality, and none the less though the acting were "to the life." Why should the expression of religious affection be considered as more innocently open to the operations of the posture-master and the elocutionist? For us the inefficacy of preaching would require no explanation in an age when clergymen should learn from stage-players how to "read the Service" of the Church.

If the fact be so old and steady, that sermons are felt to be unprofitable things, it is at least curious that we hear so much of it just now. All the authors we have cited groan over it with more or less of anger or pathos. Some of them even profanely wish that such part of the Service as follows the text were altogether abolished. This remarkable hint, with the prevailingly disparaging picture of the preaching class connected with it, raises the doubt, whether there is not something unhealthy in the whole system thus complained of,—a fatal variance between the *represented* and the *real* religion of the living generation. Not only is the complaint more emphatic than ever before; it has also this peculiarity, that it proceeds from a more serious-minded laity against a more earnest clergy. It is not the sceptical and frivolous who complain: it is not the negligent and incapable that are complained against. That the devout and thoughtful preacher should have uninterested hearers among the selfish or sensual, in whom love and reverence sleep, would be nothing new. That devout and thoughtful hearers should be aggrieved by a preacher without sympathy or insight for the deeper life of men, is natural enough. But neither of these cases corresponds entirely with the fact. Could a comparison be instituted between last Sunday's

sermons all over the country, and those of any corresponding day fifty years ago, we feel convinced that the products of the new time would show a vast and indisputable superiority. And could account be taken of the yawners and grumblers at the two dates, they would be found, we believe, chiefly among the careless and unawakened in the earlier instance, but in the later among the reflecting and susceptible. The modern discontent with the pulpit is the expression not so much of hardened indifference as of baulked capacity,—of wonder disappointed, of conscience unaided, of reverence unexercised, of aspiration sent thirsting away. The minister in such cases is not equal to the religious demands of his hearers. Yet because they, who are in the real battle of life, perplexed by its problems, and eager for sympathy in its duties and temptations, care little for his technical theology and commonplaces of morality, he often treats them as carnal-minded, and lectures them for their coldness in things Divine. How often may you hear this sort of consecrated libel from lips the least entitled to pronounce it,—uttered by some shallow-hearted closet-priest, made up of artificial venerations, in the presence of manly nobleness and womanly tenderness and childlike simplicity less far from the kingdom of heaven than himself! The patience with which it is borne by hearers conscious of not deserving it, is part of that fatal English courtesy which is exceptionally paid to the professional representatives of religion, and which so much disguises their real position. The clerical mode of insulting the laity is by anathema and incontinent speech; the retort of the laity is a studied politeness and careful reticence. In such a game the balance of success is certainly not with the clergy; and the success, like every substitution of retaliation for sympathy, is pernicious to both. The real meaning, we fear, of the outward respect paid by men of the world to men of "the cloth" is often this: "We cannot stop your mouth on Sundays, and you must have your fling at us: it is the regular thing expected of you, and we shall not take

it amiss. But you shall know nothing about us: you are bound to be squeamish; your ears shall not be grated: we keep all the pleasant things till you are out of the way." This relation between the two classes is more like a borrowed piece of French good-breeding, which thinks itself stupid without its little hypocrisy, than the manly veracity of English courtesy. If, indeed, it were merely this, that the presence of a person representing the sanctity of religion and the moral law acted as a reminder to the real conscience of his companions, and maintained the spontaneous authority of their right affections, the influence would be one of genuine sympathy, the healthy power of higher character on lower. But if their decent reserve be a mere personal concession, a deference to an official rule of right which is another's and not their own,—then it indicates a fatal chasm between the professed and the really felt standard of obligation: it is a sign that the public teacher enforces a law to which men's conscience does not respond, praises what they do not admire, denounces what they do not abhor, and exhibits to them a life foreign to their ideal. When once it comes to this, when the tacit understanding prevails,—you go your way and we go ours,—it is all over with the living power of the "Company of preachers" as interpreters of the eternal sanctities: the Church and the World coexist by established insincerity, having found their terms of mutual indulgence and immunity, but without action of heart on heart, or recognition of a common worship.

How can it have come to this? Whence the failure of the religious teachers in recognized possession to carry with them the responding convictions of their time? It certainly arises from no want of opportunity; for what set of men ever found so commanding a position ready made for them? They have not to watch and seize the spare moments we begrudge, and fling themselves across the world's tide to stem it as it flows: it pauses of itself in their behalf, and freely leaves them the seventh

part of all the years. They have not, like the politician or the author, to win a preoccupied ear, and prove our concern in what they say: they find us waiting, not only without aversion and resistance, but with hope and longing sympathy. Say what they will of the natural distaste for Divine truth, they have unexampled advantages in the mood we carry to them. So lately worn and weary, we are fastidious about nothing that belongs to the new refreshing hour. In the recoil from too much action, there is a welcome relief in thought; dazzled with the glaring surface of things, we gladly sink for shade into the invisible deeps; the withering heats withdrawn, the pores of natural feeling open and lie thirsting for the gentle rain. And are our spiritual guides stinted in their resources for moving an audience thus prepared? Is not the Revelation they interpret coextensive in its bearings with the entire range of human character and condition? Is it not theirs to draw forth the sacred meaning from the common look of things, and take away the veil of every scepticism and scorn that hides the awful beauty underneath? The materials for which the tale-writer racks his memory and invention are scattered in profusion at their feet. Domestic interiors lie open to their eye in strange variety, dark with troubled temper, or gleaming with pure affections. The young promise of life is consecrated by them at the beginning, and its story often recited to them at the end. They see the problems of conscience struggling to a solution under marvellous contrasts of condition. As occasional confidants of bitter doubt or temptation, they look into tragic depths concealed from the common eye. All that has an interest for the human heart,—from the daily cares and crosses of every lot to the rarest mysteries of grief and passion,—is part of the theme they are called to treat. Appointed to guard the springs of Pity and of Trust, they can never want a cause to plead so long as the world has sorrows unnoticed or unsanctified. Nor are they confined to the moral phenomena before their own eyes. As inter-

preters of an historical religion, whose Divine source lies far up in time, and whose scheme embraces the whole life of humanity, they have the scenery of the past placed at their disposal; and can often leave the truest lessons by reproducing the images of sacred story, or presenting portraits of faithful men in the setting of a just reverence. On another side, the topics permitted them verge towards philosophy. Not only are the great bases of Natural faith which Christianity presupposes deeply laid in the human soul; but the most familiar phrases and antitheses of Scripture,—Nature and Grace,—Spirit and Flesh,—Faith, Works, and Love,—Temporal and Eternal,—the Father and the Son,—have the very fibres of their life far down in reflective experience and speculative thought. There is therefore scarcely a special taste of the intellectual, or an affection common to us all, that is not open to the preacher's appeal. His scope is practically unrestricted. He may be poet, moralist, philosopher, historian, without prejudice to his function as a divine. Why does he not, with so many appliances, mould us as potter's clay within his hand?

Partly, perhaps, because of this very breadth of his scope,—too great for a definite official class to occupy with success. To constitute a distinct "Profession" there is need of distinct duties and powers; and in proportion as the range is left indeterminate, energy and concentration become impossible. Inherent in Protestantism itself there is a difficulty in creating and practically working a separate profession for "the cure of souls." The Roman Catholic Priesthood is an intelligible thing, the necessary Executive of a Sacramental economy. If there be in the world a fund of supernatural grace, vested in a sacred corporation and inaccessible through other media, trustees are needed for its distribution: their qualification and their function are simply official and perfectly precise,—the one arising from regular appointment, the other consisting in the use of given forms. These conditions being satisfied, all the essentials are there; and the main end is not disappointed

by any thing amiss in the personality of the sacerdotal agent, or by the total absence of any moral relation between him and the objects of his ministration. He has been duly passed by the Spiritual-Service Examiners, and has his bureau for business, like any Comptroller of Customs or Distributor of Stamps. Men of this kind,—without whose wet cross upon the forehead no baby can have grace, without whose benediction on marriage its children are illegitimate, and whose anointing of the dying body is the needful passport to the flitting soul,—have a clear and unmistakable *status*, and can give a consistent account of their separate existence. But this whole theory, in spite of Anglican attempts to patch together some shreds of it again, was practically torn to pieces by the Reformation. In one form or other, sacerdotal mediation has vanished from modern Christendom. It matters not whether you say, in the phrase of one theology, that *all* Christians are Priests, or, in the terms of another, that *no* Christians are Priests but only the Saviour himself, the result is the same: universalized on earth, or concentrated in heaven, the official order is gone. What room, then, it may be asked, is there any longer for a clerical profession at all? What now can be its essence and idea?

It rests in fact upon a twofold need. The sources of Divine truth are *written* and *unwritten*, the Letter without, the Spirit within: the one, the depository of God's past dealings with mankind; the other, his living Witness in the soul and in the world to-day. Both of these are certainly open in one sense to all: there is no outward hindrance barring access to them; they are the property of none. But the inward fitness to use them is any thing but universal, and involves special qualities which form the groundwork of an exceptional class. To interpret and appreciate sacred records written in foreign and ancient tongues, to reproduce and explain the social and spiritual life of which they are the expression, to make intelligible the identity and the difference of human feeling in their day and in our own, to

trace, by gleaming lights of good and beauty, the steps of the Divine Guide through history,—all this requires ripe scholarship and disciplined thought, such as it were vain to expect but from a specially trained body of men. It is one of the incidental blessings, indeed, of a historical Revelation, that it snatches its believers from the tyranny and isolation of their own age, widens their Time-view, makes them conscious of belonging to a rich and ripening world, and glorifies their heart with a thousand saintly sympathies and heroic admirations. Without a learned and accomplished Ministry this blessing, with all that it involves, would soon be starved out: they are the indispensable storehouse for its distribution. In sects that depreciate this systematic culture, Christianity rapidly degenerates,—confuses itself with every stage of Judaism, or runs up into spiritual egotism; and losing the Divine breadth by which it moulds the individual, sinks to the measure of private experience and passion. And if, in Churches which give academic training to their clergy, no adequately ennobling contrast is presented, it is because they give a timid half-culture, full of insincerities and reservations; with no hearty devout trust in reality,—turn out as it may,—but with foregone purpose to work up to a given scheme, and prohibit all paths that do not hit it. No man can serve two masters. Either scientific theology, or else doctrinal fixity; but not both. If you are bound to a confession, you are not free as a scholar; and your attainments, not reverently serving God's hidden ends, but skilfully securing your own preconceptions, sink to the rank of unconsecrated personal adornments. The erudition of a clergy pledged to certain critical and dogmatic results can have no judicial balance and breadth: it will be full of disproportion, empty and silent in one part, noisy and brow-beating in another; ever tending to rabbinical trifling and antiquarian punctiliousness; and will want the fresh, manly, hopeful, and believing voice which makes you feel the difference between patched-up conviction and unreserved faith. The poor results of the clerical teaching-function in

in this country can surprise no one who considers the restraints under which the whole professional mind lies. How can a man in the stocks rise up and show you the way?

At best, however, were the exposition of the records and history of our faith ever so well achieved, the result would only be a *Theology*,—a knowledge or intelligent scheme of Divine things; not *Religion*,—the inward consciousness of God and reverent acceptance of his guiding will. Theology, as the critique of Religion, always stands at one remove from its reality and essence; and no more involves it than Scientific Ethics involve personal conscientiousness. Take away every hindrance from the free development of biblical, historical, and philosophical studies, suppose even a clerisy, such as Coleridge imagined, at the head of all liberal knowledge, still they would thus far only form a body like the Divinity Professors of Germany; from whom indeed, as prevailingly *lay* teachers, theological literature receives all its richest accessions, but who are in no closer contact with the moral life of their nation than the jurists or the physicians. By learning from the best-equipped instructors the truest doctrines in the most demonstrative forms, no single soul was ever saved. There is need, therefore, of a yet higher function; which we have described as the interpretation of the *unwritten Word*, the appeal to the *Living Witness* of God in our humanity. That Witness is present in every movement of Conscience, every pure admiration, every secret reverence,—holy and gentle leadings that pass from us as a transient mood, unless some true diviner's voice finds their authority for us and awes us by what they are. The dim and mystic zone of our higher nature, where the human meets with the Divine, grows so clear to some, that they can divide the light from the darkness, and turn what to us is a confused chaos into a firmament of stars. The indeterminate suspicions that sleep within and make only a sadness there, they lift into vivid consciousness and set above us as our heavenly guide. Describe the fact as you

will,—say, if you please, in mere psychological language, that the sentiments of duty and worship are infectious and spread from mind to mind; or, in what we deem the truer terms of Christian realism, say that God's Spirit abiding in us is recognized by all as soon as seen and shown by any,—certain it is that men there always are whose simple outpouring of reverence, pity, and trust, finds ready in other hearts a solemn and loving response. This is the true *prophetic* function, the discovery in our nature and life of the meeting-place of God and man; where alone is the key of all our force and the consecration of all our work. Those who can exercise this are God's natural ministers, with or without ordination: those who cannot are but secular, though their names be in the Clergy List. Here, it is evident, is the essence of religious power, without which historical Revelations lie off at a distance, and all churches and chapels are but as the glass-cases in a Museum to preserve and exhibit the sanctities dried and classified. The testimony of history to God's Providence, of Scripture to his spiritual dealings with our race, and of all things to his Being, is rich and various and worthy to be shown forth. But greater than any testimony is the thing testified; that, with all his seeming silence, he hourly speaks with us, pleading with us in our temptations, appealing to our trust in sorrow, and living in all our better love; that he is in our midst, forming, in communion with all willing fellow-workers, his kingdom of Heaven; and that not death at last, but faithfulness and self-surrender at any time, will translate the soul into his life eternal. These realities, kindling in the light of immediate consciousness, cast all theological media into the shade. The mountain from which yesterday's sun was seen to set becomes sacred as Horeb or Tabor; and the obscurest room in London where any sacrament of love is fulfilled to-day shines like that upper chamber in Jerusalem. When your Friend is with you, you no longer discuss the evidence that he exists.

Of the three conceivable functions, then, constitutive of a clerical order,—the Priestly, the Rabbinical, and the Prophetic,—the first is with us extinct. The other two agree in requiring a special class, with qualities separating them from the mass of mankind. They differ, however, in this, that the Rabbi can be made, the Prophet cannot. The one is a scholastic product; the other, a divine gift. "Schools of the prophets," indeed, there must always be; not, however, in the vain hope of inspiring the scholar, but, through humble patience, to make a scholar of the inspired. This, no doubt, it is often difficult to do. It has been the frequent error of enthusiasm (as among the Quakers and Moravians) to pronounce it impossible or superfluous; nor is it uncommon among less eccentric believers to hear the heaviness of a preacher referred to the weight of his erudition, the cold reserve of his affections explained by the polish of his intellect. A learned man is even expected to be dull. In these vulgar impressions there is a confused mixture of just observation and illusion. It is true that the temperament susceptible of high intellectual training is much more common than the gifts by which the depths are stirred of secret religion in men's hearts; so that great attainments afford no presumption of moral power. It is also true that there is no tendency in the study of scientific theology to change the climate of any mind, and give a tropic fervour to an arctic nature: so that from a man's "sacred" learning you can no more infer an earnest godly soul, than you can be sure from his acquaintance with the Flora of the equator that he is not a phlegmatic Swede. It is further true, that the native prophetic fire often burns into false heats of impatience and presumption upon young hearts, and tempts them to decline the toils and despise the discipline of steady culture. But this belongs to its human infirmity, not to its divine excellence; and entails the vitiating curse inseparable from pride and haste. Where the religious call is faithfully and meekly answered, an anxiety will surely prevail to place at its disposal faculties

in highest order. If the Divine Guest proposes to take up his abode with you, it were a rude negligence to leave the house unclean and let the rooms be dark. The simplest reverence requires that, ere he "stands at the door and knocks," you have it "swept and garnished," and adorned with every grace attainable. Far from allowing the irreducible, uncontrollable nature of the prophetic impulse, we are convinced that if it is not eager for the yoke of patient discipline, if it fears to be stifled beneath any store of finite knowledge, it is a spurious glow not all from heaven.

There is, then, a foundation in the natural specialties of men for an order of religious guides. And there is an imperative reason in the constitution of the Christian faith for making them accomplished scholars and theologians. How far does this abstract defence apply to the system which exists? How far does the *natural* sacred class coincide with the *actual*? What provision is there for selecting persons of some religious genius, and excluding those in whom no incense ever kindled? Every one familiar with Puritan history will remember with what devout care the gifts and graces were scrutinized of each young aspirant to the pulpit, and how it was deemed a downright sacrilege to choose one whom God had not chosen. Of those who were to be "his ambassadors" he had of right the prime and real nomination, which we had only to discover and accept. Some faint remnant of this reasonable no less than pious usage is still found, we believe, among the Nonconformist bodies; a large proportion of whose ministers are accordingly determined to their profession by intrinsic fitness, real or supposed. But how is it with the parochial clergy? What proportion of them would the tutors at Oxford and Cambridge report to be drawn to their office by true affinity? In hundreds of families where a son is destined for Holy Orders, the question is never asked whether any divine mark is on him indicating a Higher Will. Mr. Christmas defines the Preacher the "Ambassador of God." How, then, was he chosen for so lofty a diplomacy? His uncle

promised the lad "the living" at his park-gate; or his father was a shrewd attorney, and bought an advowson cheap. Shocking as the contrast is between this shameless scandal and the sublime pretensions of High-Church office, the connection between them is perfectly natural. In a sacerdotal system, personal qualities go for nothing, or sink to non-essentials; whoever can administer the sacraments, can dispense God's grace; and, so long as that condition is safe, a traffic in benefices which may put a blockhead at the altar is held to involve no fatal sin. Carry the theory fully out,—scarce a step indeed beyond the point it has reached at Rome,—and, as the human attributes are inoperative in the work, you would seem not to need a *man* at all. And when we read of the Archbishop at the Cherbourg festival baptizing the locomotives with holy water, we could not help asking why an engine, instead of a live dignitary, might not, after suitable consecration, be qualified to sprinkle as well as receive the drops of grace. But the Reformed Church, disowning material consecration, and throwing the whole stress of the evangelizing process on living faith within a conscious soul,—at once the gift and the vehicle of the Spirit,—must ever keep its eye on the personality of the minister, and shrink from taking any whom God has left. In humbler, yet not dissimilar things, we follow better rules. You would not rank yourself with poets from being Shakespeare's cousin, or because you inherited a studio write "Artist" after your name. Profane not a greater sanctuary on guiltier plea. Nothing, we presume, but the system of patronage can account for the fact that our English Church, with a high average of clerical worth, contains more indifferent preachers than any Church in Christendom. All observant foreigners, resident for a while amongst us, are struck with the fact; and we have heard from Swiss and German, from Swede and American, expressions of astonishment that a people with whom religion is not a farce, and who for their other wants are accustomed to insist upon the best supply,

can be content with such poor draughts for their spiritual thirst.

Suppose, however, that by some happy device none but persons of the true prophetic type were admitted to the sacred office, the difficulty of constituting it as a profession would by no means be at an end. Its power is a subtle and mysterious essence, intense and deep till too broadly recognized; but no sooner formulated than lowered, and perhaps gone. The ordinary division of labour out of which the several trades and professions arise affects only the outward employments; assigning, indeed, different and limited tasks to our activity, and so far giving a partial direction to our development; but leaving free the great currents of inward affection and character to work and play in their own channels. The doctor, the lawyer, the banker, may have each his special prejudices and incapacities; but these need not hurt the moral staple of his mind or constrain the action of his natural sentiments as a man. The basis of the sacred profession is different. Here the proposal is to build a life upon a particular order of feelings; to detach these, and consign them to a representative class for their custody and nurture; to gather them up from being the diffused function of our integral nature, and concentrate them as objects of distinct attention and disquisition. Wonder,—Reverence,—Admiration; these it is which the expounder of holy things has to keep alive in men's hearts, and rightly direct upon divine realities. Secret roots as they are of not only every gracious blossom, but every pure fruit of life, to bring down the dews upon them and open their withered cells is indeed a blessed office, if only it be possible. But can this miracle be wrought statedly and at will? Can such highest affections be reduced to a business, and be acted on by rule? Their whole excellence depends on their simplicity, spontaneousness, unselfishness, carrying us out in trust and love to what is above us. But if you create an art for taking charge of them, how can you, as a proficient in it, retain that simpli-

city? The emotions for which you have to contrive, you no longer healthfully experience; in looking at them you lose them. It was their Divine Object that entranced you once; but you turn the focus inwards, and the object slips away. The best inspirations of our nature are meant to remain fresh and first-hand, and lose their identity in losing their originality. Charter them as a craft or guild; and passing into the hand of conscious skill, they contract the tincture of self, and awaken the vanity of possession. A class-interest in regard to them, a class-criticism, a class-technology arises, and chatters and chafes and scrutinizes till the bloom is all rubbed off. The verdant places of the heart have but a tender grass, and will not bear the tramp of too much speech. This, we think, is a serious danger to those who follow Art as a profession; their pure sympathy with the expressiveness of nature, their creative instinct of Beauty, need great intensity to hold their ground against the tyranny of opinion and fastidious self-comparison: and hurtful as the slang of hardened criticism is to the reverential faith of the young artist, is the technic of theology to the simple piety which it complicates, bewilders, and talks down.

In an official class for sacred things the Primary devoutness which lives in God must dreadfully tend to pass into the Secondary stage of "Concern for Religion"; to slip from the Infinite reality to the ecclesiastical drama, and, wakened from its vault of midnight worship, detect itself kneeling before the glass. This self-conscious reflection busies itself with analyzing and estimating either other people's religion, or else its own. The former habit is almost inevitable in the presence of so many sects and schools within the nominal embrace of our common Christendom. The tangle, indeed, is too intricate and thorny for even professional patience to unravel as a whole; but when every layman falls in with people that carry some queer creed within their head and an odd hat without,—when every parson in his rounds meets rivals on the same field,—when the gilt

cross on St. Nepomuc's looks loftily down on the thin brick Ebenezer,—when the church-going stranger in town, walking on the wrong side of the street, gets shown by mistake into a Unitarian chapel,—it is not surprising if curiosity about the faith of neighbours, and the comparative anatomy of doctrine, should too much take the place and assume the guise of a more simple and childlike piety. Does any one doubt the evil of this, or suppose that the spread of theological connoisseurship is equivalent to the deepening of the Christian life? Let him give his attention, for two or three months, to the newest offspring of this tendency,—the so-called "Religious Newspapers"; and when he has watched the interior of which they give him a view, let him say whether on the whole any more bitter satire was ever produced on the unity, the guilelessness, the humility, and heavenly-mindedness of the Christian Church. Even the party-ties which might be supposed to compensate the loss of gentler bonds, partake more of corporate egotism than of personal affection. They are not so much positive sympathies drawing close to a centre of spiritual attraction, as a residual circle left clear by the repulsive power of antipathies all round, and inscribed with the motto, "Thank God, *We* are not as other men are." How rare, accordingly, it is to find a clergyman who does not live in the perpetual consciousness of opponents near him! or to hear a sermon without allusion to unbelievers or misbelievers! or to be taken up by the Preacher on the side of one's human tenderness and genuine conscience, and thence translated unresistingly into the higher atmosphere of aspiration, trust, and inmost prayer! He speaks to us through a dogmatic screen that muffles all his tones, and deadens the ring of their humanity. He looks at us with the glazed eye of ecclesiastical decorum and reserve, that shuts us up and leaves us dark. Would he but meet us face to face and glance to glance, and appeal to us in the open vernacular of every true heart, he would find us not dry at the fount of tears and penitence and faith.

The other form of professional elaboration of religion is sincerer in its source, but not much better in its effect. It turns inward instead of outward; and analyzes not other faiths, but its own feelings. In the eye of many a preacher, the essence of what is called "personal religion" consists in keeping the finger of observation ever on the spiritual pulse, in marking the temperature of the clime within, in shuddering at every shadow and suspecting every gleam. He tells you your experience with a magnifying particularity that makes it hideous, and that would reduce the eye of a saint to mere blood-vessel and tissue. Too often he produces the very disease which he describes, fixes evanescent ills by dwelling on them, and lectures on our epidemic sins till the healthy world turns sick and finds its home a hospital. His lesson is differently taken by different minds, but wholesomely by none. The coarse-grained and ungenial believe all the evil of their neighbours; the pure and susceptible, of themselves: while the morally sound and firm know it to be false of both, and writhe under a teaching which insults every natural admiration, systematizes spiritual slander, and disowns the watchful guidance of God. The teaching which works us into a hectic of self-consumption is as untrue to the Gospel as that whose tact and scruples are at home among the creeds. Christianity is not a pathology, whether of the beliefs or of the affections; and will never have power till this critical demon be cast out. Yet how shall *those* cast it out who, whatever sacred name they may pronounce, are steeped in the influences that tempt its approach; whom, therefore, it chiefly possesses; who know no incantations,—scarcely any prayers,—except what it secretly suggests? There is but one hope: let them acknowledge their failure, feel their powerlessness, go straight to the Living Source, and own, "We could not;" and perhaps He may reply, "Bring it hither to Me!"

Closely as these dangers cling to the religious office, we do not mean to urge them as objections to its institution. Where, as in the Society of Friends, it has been dispensed

with in favour of the bare "movements of the Spirit," the results have not been encouraging. And indeed, had these good people conceived rather of an "Indwelling" than an "Irruption" of the Spirit, they would perhaps have imagined a less fitful relation between God and man, have spared a little consecration for habitual personal qualities, and admitted that some men might be, more than others, *permanent* organs of Divine influence in the world. Admit this, and a clerisy must follow. If it brings difficulties and temptations into existence with it, nothing remains but to keep feeble spirits out, and let the strong struggle through the dangers as they may. This would assuredly be done with much more frequent success, had the profession to bear only its natural burden, without enormous increase from an artificial ecclesiastical system. The conditions imposed upon the Christian preachers, in the vast majority of cases, are enough to suppress the clearest religious genius; and the nobler and finer it is, the more will they be intolerable. Can it be pretended that any mind of the first order could move freely under the weight of dogma it is expected to carry? How much of that dogma, avowed in the creeds every Sunday, has any week-day reality? Where, in the scenes of men's earnest life or spontaneous thought, does it come into expression? What proportion of the beliefs contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, or in the symbolical books of any Church, comes naturally out in the poetry, the fiction, the philosophy of our time? The men of letters are so silent of them as to indicate that a few only of these ideas,—though infinitely solemn,—appear in their picture of the universe. And it is notorious that a literature has been created on purpose to supply the defect, and, for the sake of a special public, to exhibit life under more orthodox aspect. The fact is painfully significant. "The Religious Public?"—and what other Public have you a right to recognize or to ignore in this God-created world? Where are the people from whose nature he has omitted the springs of Wonder, Love, Reverence, and quite hidden the

beauty and mystery of life? Who formed the "religious public" of the "Friend of Sinners"? O ye masters of holy things! has it come to this? that ye cannot find the inner sanctuary of our common heart, and bring us to kneel with you, though dumb worships sigh and wait within us? and must ye have your little private chapel, and your pet audience admitted by ticket, and no light but what streams through the forms of select and canonized saints? And as for what is called a "Religious literature": time was that *all* literature was religious; and poets, historians, philosophers looked out on as sacred world, and breathed as natural a prayer as the divine. Is it not theirs to set before us the ideal side of life, the essential thought and meaning that runs through it? And how should they do this, did they think it has no inner side at all, and see in it only a scramble of appetites and a dust of "phenomena"? The natural alliance of every unconstrained literature is with the real religion of its time, to whose inner admirations its appeal is made. They may be low idolatries; but how have they become so? Through the death of higher faiths in those who pretend to keep them; but who, instead of keeping them in the only possible way, viz., by a life and mind grown from their idea, have handed them to the custody of formulated words. The very way to create a defiant worldliness, proud of its sceptic and outcast position, is to disparage such venerations as a man has, and attach impossible conditions to those which he has not; and virtually tell him, "Either repeat after us the following sentences, or else pass for one who sees nothing sacred in heaven or earth." While the demand for sympathy and approximation is all on one side, the chasm between the secular and the ecclesiastic spirit can never be crossed. Till the higher stoop, the lower will not rise;—stoop, not merely in voluntary humility, but in simple, manly fellow-feeling; heartily sinking down to the solid ground of some common conviction,—if possible, some common enthusiasm; and forcing no ulterior growth, till it springs of itself

from the root thus warmed and nurtured. This is precisely what a Christ-like teacher, deep alike in human sympathy and spiritual insight, would spontaneously do; but is rendered most difficult to men bound not only to visit and heal the ailing soul, but to carry and every where unpack the huge medicine-chest of ancient dogma, and prescribe in the symbols of an unknown tongue. There are few among the clerical body, we are convinced, on whom the encumbrance of so much doctrine sits easily, like the natural dress they give to their common thought and affection. They take it up in set speech and with official voice. They shape it into the same stiff folds of phrase and order straight from the memory, not fresh flowing from the heart. Whatever decorous disguise it may give to the cold and formal, it taxes heavily the flexible and loving soul. It cannot, indeed, seal up the fountains which God opens there; but the running waters are slackened and half-choked, when forced through the mill-rails of the church canals, instead of winding their own sweet way along the meadows of a pure nature.

How, indeed, can it be otherwise? We do not live in a Nicene, an Athanasian, or even a Lutheran world. From a distance, and by an effort, we may understand and not deny the schemes of doctrine which they have handed down. But if so, it is only by reference to the antecedents out of which they grew, and the opposites which they pushed from the field. Apart from these historical lights, now quenched for so many centuries, and totally absent from the common consciousness of to-day, the very language of the old creeds and confessions is quite dark: the pregnant phrases in which the distinctive meaning is wrapped have dwindled to a husk in the climate of our modern thought, or contain, if any living idea, an altered one. Hence these formulas, where they do not positively suggest the false, fail, like foreign speech, to strike upon the home truth of men's inward belief. They are a set of judicial decisions cut off from the cases on which they pronounce; and to say

nothing of their being ever open to revision, the perpetual recital of them, and administration of religion exclusively through them, is a monstrous oppression on noble consciences and high affections. If even the Scriptures, with their broad popular language and that one Divine Image which so speaks for itself, need to have the temporary separated from the permanent, the letter of their age translated into the spirit of ours, how much less must the rigid definitions of metaphysical divinity, framed in terms of dead controversies, be capable of sincerely uttering what our generation wants to say! Each period of the world has its own questions to answer, its own burden to bear: and who can believe that if the Son of Man were to reveal himself again in our present England, he would exercise us in the Nicene Creed or the Augsburg Confession; and not rather find anew the springs of conscience and of faith, conversing with us by the way, in the language of the workshop and the home, about the sins we too well know and the sanctities we too feebly trust? Leave, then, to those who are fittest to represent his spirit, a freedom congenial and essential to it. Let the champion of God have courage to live out of his freshest inspirations, and go forth with the simple shield of faith and sword of the Spirit. An archangel's strength would sink under the chain-armonr of the creeds.

We are far from charging the professional representatives of religion with any special insincerity. We have no doubt that in general they are pretty well made up into at least a belief that they believe the whole dogmatic system to which they stand committed. But, except with dull men, it does notoriously take a good deal of "making-up" to bring them to this not very triumphant result. Those who are sufficiently behind the scenes to know what is implied in this process, and along what doleful paths often lie the approaches to Ordination, will understand us when we say that too frequently that goal is reached by parting with a Holy Spirit which the hands of no Bishop can restore. In

many an Oxford room a youth has been found with dawning suspicions of a world other than that imagined by the "great dons." Even there his Heaven will find him out, and try whether the spell of custom or the life of God is to be strongest within him. With the scholar's musical heart, he cannot escape stray far-off tones penetrating through the local air, and wakening unknown chords of his nature. Does not Tennyson lie upon his table, and Carlyle stand upon his shelf? Has he not been reading Niebuhr, and hearing something of Ewald's *Life of Christ*? Snatches of influence from powers like these haunt him with strange visions, at once terrible and divine. Alone, past midnight, at the week's end, he closes his books, and reads before the lamp is put out a sermon of Tauler's, or a chapter of the "German Theology." Why does it sink to such unspeakable depth in him, and fill his prayers with such real communings, while the service at St. Mary's next morning carries its solemnity scarce below the surface? What is "belief"? What "unbelief"? What "mysticism"? Wherein differ the "natural" and the "supernatural"? How stand related God's historical and his perennial manifestation? Are these things fully known to our Heads of Houses? and when were they fathomed, and the chart of the survey finished? Such questionings flash in upon him as his wings are growing, urging him in due time to rise in his strength and follow the light to its source. But nearer to his eye lies the long-destined parish. The old rector is impatient for his curate; the letters from home are reckoning the months to the time of ordination. He is lonely with his secret, on which every thing about him seems to frown. Social conservatism, scholarly prestige, ecclesiastical taste, academic casuistry, draw their silent lines around him, and lay to him so close a siege that he surrenders, with or without an agony. Or if he unbosoms himself to his tutor, he is referred to the standard recipe for such cases,—approved alike by High Church and Broad Church,—to repair the flaws in his creed by parochial work;

to live on the given doctrine as *an hypothesis*, in the hope of its striking root as a reality; to profess, that is, a lie to-day for the reversion of the truth to-morrow. It is possible enough that he may find such advice succeed: there is nothing to prevent it: "parochial work" will serve as well as any other to stifle the misgivings of conscience, and complete the "quenching of the Spirit"; and in time he may forget his doubts, and recite what he has to say without a twinge. When the "hypothesis" is covered over with the glebe grass, and smiles with garden-beds and shrubberies,—nay, is strong enough to support the school and village-library as well,—he ceases to ask how deep it goes, and is content with the report of a living rock beneath. There are, however, men of finer nature, to whom a course of "hypothesis" (we had nearly said "hypocrisy") cannot be administered with the same success, and on whom the penalties quickly fall which are righteously annexed to all profession in advance of conviction. Smothered misgivings revive, and move with broader shadow across a mind no longer innocent. The offices of worship are crossed with passages of shrinking and of shame, and almost cease to be true except in their words of penitence. Preaching becomes not an outpouring of faith and love, but a diplomatic act of caution. When the struggle between inward self-contempt and the outward religious function becomes too intolerable, the cure is thrown up, perhaps for some secular profession; but perhaps only to change the scene, to repeat, yet abate, the agony, till custom has done its stupefying work, and the soul has obediently shaped itself to the dimension of its task. What is a man worth as a religious guide, when through such processes (which, alas, are no fictions) he finally gets made-up to the orthodox point? He has sold his divine gift into servitude, and will prophesy for God no more.

If in other cases the system, instead of subjugating the man, is made to bend to his individuality, and assume the

meaning he wants to put upon it, the consequences are doubtless less deplorable, and a practical latitude is won: but the inference is still the same; there is too much dogma for the living force that is to work in it. The disproportion is equally manifest, whether the adjustment is brought about by coercing the person or coercing the doctrine. Men of deep and original nature, like the Preacher at Lincoln's Inn and the Greek Professor at Oxford, cannot be suppressed or moulded by enclosure in any framework stiff with age. It glows and softens by their very contact with it, and takes their shape instead of giving its own. The results are startling enough. Mr. Maurice is the apostle of a faith more strongly contrasted,—we do not hesitate to say,—with the prevailingly-received doctrine of his Church than the Christianity of the second and third century with the serious Paganism before which it stood. Religions more absolutely different than his and, for instance, Dr. M'Neile's, according to any just measure of the intervals between faiths, can hardly be found within the circuit or near the margin of Christian history. Yet he recites the same creeds, not only, we are sure, with the purest sincerity, but, we conceive, with a careful fullness of meaning in every phrase, and a consistent realization of the connected whole, very unusual among his contemporaries. Nor is his construction, as many persons erroneously suppose, a personal invention for his own use. It reproduces in some important points the genuine thought of the early Church; and would rest upon very strong grounds, were there no gospel but the fourth, and no ecclesiastical theology but of Alexandria. But as an account of what was meant by the founders of his Church in the sixteenth century,—of the sense, therefore, in which its formularies are imposed,—it must always seem far-fetched and untenable, and leave the advantage with its opponents. Fettered by obligations from this side, he is not free to raise simply the issues whether his doctrine is scriptural or unscriptural,—is in the sense of the first centuries or not,—

above all, is in itself true or false: be his success ever so great on these points, the final sentence turns upon another, —whether this is what the English Reformers meant, and what he undertook to teach. Failing to convince even his warm admirers of this, he is shorn of his proper strength: his justest reasonings, his genial learning, his religious insight, his exemplary goodness, are neutralized by the repute of a false position. A mind like his wants more room than the constitution of his Church allows him; and even the portion of room which he has taken, with no idea of transgressing loyal limits, is regarded by almost every one else as an irregular latitude. Still more painfully perplexing to the moral sense of unskilled observers like ourselves was Mr. Jowett's promptitude in signing an article of faith which directly affirms the very doctrine of atonement (that Christ by the sacrifice of himself reconciled *God to man*) which he directly denies. That he found some means of doing this with a clear conscience, we do not for a moment doubt: by what Hegelian resolution of contradictories into a higher unity the feat was accomplished we may perhaps learn from the second edition of his Commentary. But meanwhile, if the most anxious candour can suggest no presentable explanation of such compliances, they cannot but produce a truly devastating impression of clerical unveracity and academic casuistry. What can be more unfortunate than that men's best feelings,—their love of plain dealing and good faith, their abhorrence of all "paltering in a double sense,"—should be enlisted *against* a scientific theology and a deeper religion? Yet so it must be, as long as scholars, having bound themselves in honour to a closed circle of doctrine, forthwith set to work to open it. What can be said for a system which makes the movement of thought a breach of trust? We owe it to the excessive encumbrance of authoritative dogma that faithful orthodoxy sinks into powerless routine, and irrepressible genius and learning violate their vows. Our illustrations of the melancholy fact have been drawn from the Church

of England. But the results are precisely the same in every Nonconformist body which emulates the Church of England in the rigour of its creed and the liberality of its culture.

That the clerical religion is quite artificially made up, and divided by a fatal cleft from the lay state of mind, is evident on comparing in the world the classes who lived and learned together in their college-years. The undergraduates in any given University, and the graduates too for a considerable time, are tolerably homogeneous in their tastes, their admirations, their convictions; with their marks, indeed, of individuality, and their varieties of pursuit, but with no differences of principle and feeling that are not quite miscellaneously distributed. Bring a few hundreds of them together again twenty years later; give all the clerical men credit for faithful adherence to their ordination vows; and see whether this does not mark them out as altogether "a peculiar people." How many of the lawyers believe all those doctrines in the lot? how many of the doctors? how many of the men of science and letters? Without counting exceptional heretics and sceptics, is not the proportion remarkable of those to whom the phraseology and formulas of divinity are an uncomfortable sort of speech, answering to nothing deep within them, and which would never rise to their own lips? Why should this be? Why should the lives that began with many a common enthusiasm, so widely diverge on the very field which is *not* professional, but absolutely human and universal in its interest? It is simply because, in the representatives of sacred things, the living humanity is overlaid with a dead crust of ecclesiastical deposit, which oppresses without sharing the pulsations underneath.

And, accordingly, whenever a Preacher appears with inspirations too strong to heed professional restraints, he has to wait scarce an hour for a response, and the suspended tide of sympathy is glad to flow. What was it that drew men, with irresistible attraction, around the pulpit of

Robertson of Brighton? His eloquent lips? his graceful person? his fearless heresies? All these, no doubt, provided you take them only as the organs and manifestation of the true prophet-soul within; the soul leavened through and through with an all-surrendering faith, and meeting God in whatever is real and true. He had the courage to live the life of his age, as the nearest expression of the life of all ages; to shrink from none of its doubts, to go down to the core of its sins and sorrows, to carry his sympathy into its saddest problems; to keep no separate theology, but let the central fire of heaven within him fuse down his poetry, his philosophy, his scholarship, his moral sentiment, into one entire religion, identical with his Christian faith. Nothing came from him at secondhand, with any dust or soil of use, but fresh as morning air. Not that he was above being influenced by the men and books that held any true converse with him. On the contrary, he had all the susceptibility to deep impressions, the affectionate dependence on other minds, which is the glorious paradox of original natures, the self-confession of their common kindred. But, as in all such cases, each foreign light that struck his heart, instead of being reflected back from a mere repeating surface, entered only to prove that he too was luminous, and must burst into a beacon-flame for the guidance of trackless wanderers. It is vain to tell us, in disparagement of such men, and in apology for pulpit humdrum, that there is no room for originality in religion,—that its truths, once for all revealed in Christ, are fixed, and can only be repeated in the ear of one generation after another. Like every thing in God,—his holiness, and the beauty of his world,—they are indeed eternal: but, like these, they are ever born anew into manifestation before us and consciousness within us; and, above all, they have a fresh genesis in every greatly-believing and divinely-tempered soul. What more surely eternal than the Holy Spirit? yet even this may have a day of Pentecost, and sweep over the heart "as a mighty rushing wind," and find utterance in

"new tongues," and hurry its Stephen upon heresy and death. One who, like Robertson, speaks to the sleeping nobleness of men's hearts out of the waking nobleness of his own, wields a truly revealing power; opening unsuspected worlds where the inner eye saw nothing before, and so lifting the roof as to let in the heavens. The eagerness with which such men are listened to shows how little the influence of the pulpit has really declined, wherever it is relieved of the oppressive weight of traditional dogma and conventional style, and taken as the station of some self-forgetful organ of the Living Word.

If the public services of religion spoke with adequate power to the real wants of men, the clerical profession would have no serious discontent to fear. Did it worthily wield that one great instrument, it would meet with grateful recognition, and be followed with no unkindly eye through the six silent days of the week. But, as it is, the clergy suffer a great disadvantage from the absence of some clearly-defined and positive work other than speech,—work visible, punctual, and of recognized utility. Far be it from us to deny or underrate the impalpable influence of wisdom and sympathy circulating through the homes of a parish or a congregation, and ever accessible where counsel is needed or sorrow calls. But how can you erect it into a distinct business, to carry about the essence of your character? What would your character be worth, if you really thought it fitly set apart for this sort of currency? The simple duties of Christian pity and affection cannot be delegated, without equal injury to those who, by deputing, evade them, and to those who, in being their deputies, strip them of their spontaneous grace and charm. The secret sense of this truth fosters a deep social distrust of pastoral charities and attentions; and creates a false and morbid conscience in the minister himself. It is notorious that into the scenes most needing the offices of Christian faith and love a man can carry no such disadvantage as the clerical costume; and it takes no little time for even the sincerest self-devotion

to remove the dislike of the black coat. Grown men and women in these days do not sincerely want to be as sheep to a shepherd; and the attempt to work out the details of such a relation incurs all the penalties and miseries of pretence. Between the servility of those who want to use him, and the shyness of those who are afraid of being used, the clergyman steers an embarrassed course; and where frank and friendly treatment assures him that he is with those who do not distrust him, he begins to distrust himself; he is full of wonder and compunction that he is unable to speak and act differently from others; that he cannot set himself above the common humanities; and that, especially in the presence of sorrow and death, he so naturally falls into the attitude of reverential learning and looking up, as to a higher mystery, that he is rather the awe-struck child than the superior and master of the hour. Or, if he be a man of dry and formal nature, he will force himself into professional mannerisms and sentences, which do indeed difference him from the layman, but having no fine fibres of connection with the antecedent and succeeding life, never grow into the heart of the occasion on which they are struck. These indeterminate spiritual relations of man with man are too delicate, we fear, and too dependent on spontaneity of affection, to be made the chief business of a profession. It is in no slight degree the need of something outward, something which the will can at any moment command, that tempts the clergy to lean on some *opus operatum*, and encourages the reaction into sacerdotal formalism. They know not what they are good for, or how they differ from private Christians, unless they have some mystic activities to exercise. We are convinced that nothing would so surely dissipate this High-Church disease, as the obligation, could it be made effectual, of some healthy, definite, intelligible social work, fixed to nameable hours and visible to the community around. The anarchy and self-will into which our moral police has fallen, render it difficult to recover such tasks of service for a staff of religious

teachers: else who, in theory, would be more natural administrators, under suitable checks, of many of the agencies of our higher culture and civilization? The energetic and faithful among them do actually carve out work of this kind for themselves, and are found in the schoolroom, at the Board of Guardians, and in committee-rooms of public institutions. But as they meet there many a lay citizen who takes his share of such duties of his own accord and "out of hours," these things are set down to the account of individual character, and do not help the credit and clear the conception of the profession. Were the minister of religion to become,—by general usage as he often is by personal choice,—the organ of valuable knowledge to his people; to open to their intelligence the very things that lie before their eyes,—the antiquities of their village, the natural history of their coast and fields, the story of the old families of honourable name, whose mansions are in sight,—he would stand before the popular imagination as a schoolmaster of adults, a superior in something which they readily appreciate. Until in some such way greater body can be given to the clerical functions, they will fail to obtain a basis of firm trust; they will suffer in repute from indefinite expectations; and take morbid directions from the mere misery of uncertainty.

It is very natural for preachers to measure the faith and piety of their time by the numbers in habitual attendance on churches and chapels, or giving support to connected institutions. Such a standard, we are convinced, is entirely delusive. Disaffection towards the organized worship of the country is not so groundless as to stand in evidence of a mere godless insensibility. The classes in whom it is strongest, and who have most completely passed out of clerical influence,—viz., the artisans on the one hand, and the academical and professional laity on the other,—are certainly not the least impressionable; but, on the contrary, show in other directions a ready susceptibility of enthusiasm and reverence. It is not amongst them that you chiefly

find contempt for poetry, stupidity as to art, disbelief of nobleness, sordid Phœnician politics, or distrust of unprofitable truth. Would you bring together an audience where Burns's verse would strike most home, where Ruskin would have most believing hearers, where Miss Nightingale's name would be greeted with deepest honour, where patriotic sacrifices would be demanded least in vain, it is precisely from these classes that you would do well to draw it. And is it to be supposed that those who are quickest in response to these lesser religions of life, can be hardened against the infinite reverence that comprehends them all? Where genius, beauty, goodness, in their human apparition, are so willingly believed and welcomed with so pure a joy, depend upon it there is an eye of recognition ready for their auguster and diviner form. Antecedently to experience, who would say that the elements of religious character existed with any distinctive force in the social ranks that are found around the pulpits of the land? With all their intelligence and worth, the trading middle-class, and the upper circle just beyond, are, of all their contemporaries, the most inaccessible by habit and education to any self-forgetful fervours, the most conventional and cautious in their judgments, the most disposed to bow down before wealth and station, and the most anxiously studious of decorum. Many virtues may doubtless be interwoven with such a staple of character. But these are prosaic qualities, closer by far to the actual than to any ideal world, betraying an admiration and secret homage not very free to aspire beyond the near and visible, and tending, in any endeavour after higher ascent, to a religion of mere longer prudence. The administration of Christianity, adapted to such temperament and capacity, cannot be taken to exhaust its power, or to justify an ungenial despair of those to whom it does not speak. Traces abound of an unorganized religion sleeping or struggling in men's hearts beyond the circle of the organized. The most powerful literature of our age, even when heretical and rebellious, merciless to parsons

and disrespectful to creeds, is in its essence anything but irreligious; its hold on the time is not through the bitterness and scorns, but through the wonder, the veracities, and the tenderness of our nature. The tendency of Art is more and more to break with the conventional, and in humble conscientiousness to reverence the true. Nor are we discouraged by the signs of the times which are most often adduced in evidence of decadent or diseased belief. The theurgic or demonologic superstitions which are fevering and deteriorating so many minds, attest, no doubt, something worn-out in the current teachings of Churches; but also, some continued though desolate groping of faith, assured that a Divine world still lives and is not far. And the political coldness and indifferentism about which all journals voluminously lament, and which honourable but unhappy members meet in conclave to remove, have perhaps a certain propriety and veracity in them not altogether profane. We had rather see men wait quietly, and rest upon their oars, till some just object of admiration and pursuit brought its appeal to them, than work themselves into a fume about nothing, or pretend to a passion they have not. In the total dearth of awakening questions in public life, under the sleep of heroic virtues, in the absence of great dangers, with a sluggish cloud hanging over Europe, a people rushing into enthusiasms must be made of knaves or fools; and we respect the impassive reserve which holds back, and damps the fire down, and will not burn its fuel to the waste air. We do not doubt that, when true appeal is made to any worthy zeal, the responsive chord will be found in tune; when there is anything admirable, it will be admired; when sacrifice is wanted for noble ends, it will be ready. Taken all in all, we doubt whether the hearts of Englishmen were ever more prepared for being drawn together by common sentiments of reverence, conscience, and aspiration. Would that the symptoms were more wisely and kindly judged; and the organized religion more capable of interpreting and appropriating the unorganized!

X.

THE UNITARIAN POSITION.

Letter to the Rev. S. F. Macdonald.

Dear Sir,—I have received and read with much interest the tract on the "Unitarian Position" which you have been kind enough to send me. With many of its statements of principle I find myself in hearty accord; and even where I cannot entirely concur in your conclusions, you so far carry my sympathy with you by the spirit and aim with which they are recommended, that I feel impelled to explain to you,—as in self-defence,—the grounds of my partial dissent.

And first, let me disclaim in the most emphatic manner the sentiment which, quite erroneously as I believe, you impute to some among us,—of objection to well-defined and distinctly-taught opinions in matters of theology. With every earnest and thoughtful man it is a spiritual necessity to establish himself in clear and positive religious convictions, and an imperative duty to give them simple and open expression in his worship and his life. In every Christian congregation there must be, as the ground of its internal union and external action, a fundamental agreement for the time being,—among themselves and with their minister,—as to the main features of Christian doctrine, as well as the essentials of Christian life; and the unreserved preaching of these is no less obligatory upon the society than the private profession of them upon the individual. Still further, it is incumbent on the wider aggregates of persons scattered over the area of a province or a country, and,

united in earnest theological conviction, to combine together for the teaching and vindication of what they believe to be true, by the press, the pulpit, the missionary, and all similar agencies. On these points I never heard of any one who entertained a doubt; nor am I aware of a single sentence ever uttered or written by any one of our ministers or laymen which gives even the faintest colour to the imputation of indifference to definite thought, unreserved expression, and public union in relation to theological opinion.

The real question is this,—whether Theological combinations and Church combinations should be identical or distinct? If the sympathies and admirations and persuasions which make men of one school of theology are, in the long run, the same which group them into one Church fellowship and constitute their historical unity,—then undoubtedly the intellectual theory and the spiritual bond coalesce. And in all churches whose very "scheme of redemption" is dogmatic, in which the salvation of mankind from a pre-existent curse and certain perdition, and their actual deliverance from the power of sin, are made conditional on belief in a given system of doctrines, there is a hopeless inter-weaving of theology with the spiritual life. With *them* it is quite true that if you alter the doctrine you alter the Church; and to them it seems absurd to recognize as of the same communion a believer not holding their distinctive characteristics. The logical classification and the spiritual classification are with them necessarily the same.

This, however, is the consequence of precisely that notion of *orthodoxy* which we are in the habit of regarding with just dislike, and for which we substitute the more generous recognition of a *Progressive Theology amid sameness of Spiritual Relations*. The consequence is simple and obvious. It is the conscious sameness of spiritual relations that constitutes *a Church;* it is the temporary concurrence in theological opinion that embodies itself in a creed and makes *a Sect* in the proper sense. The very

life and soul of the former, so far as we are concerned, is in the feeling and proclamation of unity in spite of difference. The essence of the latter is in the accentuation of difference amid unity,—in the imitative acceptance of the very principle and mode of thought whence other sects arise. We are bound, I must think, to hold our particular form of *personal opinion* on a different tenure from the *spiritual affections* which bring successive generations to kneel in our churches; to treat the former as a life interest, the latter as a freehold in perpetuity; and to beware of fixing upon worshipping assemblies and an ecclesiastical body whose life runs on through centuries, the mutable types of thought special to our own time. But such inadvertence we do assuredly commit the moment we attach a doctrinal epithet, be it "Unitarian," or be it "Trinitarian," to the Church of which we are members. Observe what consequences are involved, if once we admit that the defining essence of our Church is the Unitarian doctrine which the last century has worked out into prominence. In that case, we are essentially cut off as a Church from identity with the very body of persons that built and in many instances endowed our places of worship, and from whom, as the family tombstones attest, most of us are descended. Upon what ground, for instance, can you claim a rightful succession, as you have so nobly done, to Matthew Henry and the founders of Crook Street, if you place the *essence* of *your Church* in doctrines which *he did not hold?* When our religious properties were attacked some years ago, precisely upon this ground, that our essence was Unitarianism and the founders' certainly was not, what was our defence? We denied the allegation, and pleaded that the distinction of *us both* was one and the same, viz., the maintenance of a Catholic Christianity and open theology as against any fixity of doctrine in this type or in that; and we appealed with special pride to the Salter's Hall meeting, at which a majority in an open assembly, almost exclusively Trinitarian, refused to declare theirs a Trinitarian Church. What

right have we to claim affinity with that example, and celebrate it among the glories of our liberal ancestry, if in our own persons we reverse it, and abuse the latitude they left us to its own destruction,—establishing the Church which they bequeathed us on the negation of a doctrine which they believed, yet would not make their ground of union? Our whole inheritance from the past is bound up with the condition, that we are *not* to plant ourselves as a Church on a dogmatic foundation; and it is surely the grossest inconsistency,—our opponents must think it hypocrisy,—at once to applaud and destroy the latitude of principle which is traditional amongst us.

So conscious were our leading men of this at the time of the attack upon our chapels, that they at once saw the unfitness of what seemed to be the natural organ of representation and defence,—I mean the Unitarian Association,—to act at all on our behalf. How could an organization, with a doctrinal name upon its face, go into court and plead our right to our chapels on the ground of their doctrinal neutrality? Accordingly *another* association had to be got up specially for the purpose,—the English Presbyterian Association,—in order to evade the inconsistency. And I know it to have been the opinion of the two founders of the Unitarian Association (the late Mr. Aspland and Mr. Edgar Taylor) that they committed a disastrous mistake in giving a doctrinal name to the society; and that, the error being discovered, it would be doubling the wrong to make the Association in any sense the representative organ of our body. I have this in Mr. Edgar Taylor's own handwriting. He was for letting the Association subside into a body of *individuals* interested in the propagation of Unitarianism, like a combination for the diffusion of peace or temperance ideas; but for trusting to other and broader agencies to express and sustain the natural affinities of our Churches. I confess myself of quite the same mind. To a Unitarian *Society*,—just as to a Reform Society,—I would willingly belong, but of a "Unitarian Church" I could never be a

member; and I lament to find myself more and more excluded from the sympathies and associations that are dearest to me by the degeneracy of our Catholic Nonconformity, with its self-defensive piety, into the noisy egotism of the sects.

You speak, and with great truth, of the long line of believers in Unitarian doctrine traceable from the present hour up to the early ages of Christendom; and you justly say that in your view they form one communion with us, and are our spiritual ancestry. The negative side of this truth is, that their ecclesiastical opposites do *not* form, in the same sense and degree, one communion with us, and are out of the line of our spiritual ancestry. Now it seems to me impossible, without a most perverse reading of ecclesiastical history and literature, to adjust one's sympathies to this arrangement. I am constrained to say that neither my intellectual preference nor my moral admiration goes heartily with the Unitarian heroes, sects, or productions of any age. Ebionites, Arians, Socinians, all seem to me to contrast unfavourably with their opponents, and to exhibit a type of thought and character far less worthy, on the whole, of the true genius of Christianity. I am conscious that my deepest obligations, as a learner from others, are in almost every department to writers not of my own creed. In Philosophy I have had to unlearn most that I had imbibed from my early text books, and the authors in chief favour with them. In Biblical interpretation, I derive from Calvin and Whitby the help that fails me in Crell and Belsham. In Devotional literature and religious thought, I find nothing of ours that does not pale before Augustine, Tauler, and Pascal. And in the Poetry of the Church it is the Latin or the German hymns, or the lines of Charles Wesley, or of Keble, that fasten on my memory and heart, and make all else seem poor and cold. I cannot help this. I can only say, I am sure it is no perversity; and I believe the preference is founded in reason and nature, and is already widely spread amongst us. A

man's "Church" must be the home of whatever he most deeply loves, trusts, admires, and reveres,—of whatever most divinely expresses the essential meaning of the Christian faith and life; and to be torn away from the great company I have named, and transferred to the ranks which command a far fainter allegiance, is an unnatural and for me an inadmissible fate. That I find myself in intellectual accordance with the Socini, or Blándrata, or Servetus in one cardinal doctrine,—and that a doctrine not distinctively Christian, but belonging also to Judaism, to Islam, and to simple Deism,—is as nothing compared with the intense response wrung from me by some of Luther's readings of St. Paul, and by his favourite book, the "Theologia Germanica."

So much as to one's spiritual relationship with the past. Then in regard to the future, you disclaim,—and I well know how sincerely,—any idea of putting dogmatic bonds upon our successors. Yet surely, if we make the Unitarian doctrine the essence of our Church, a congregation or minister cannot depart from that doctrine without forfeiting membership of that Church and having to seek a new ecclesiastical domiciliation; and this is precisely what we mean by Church exclusiveness and a closed theology. It is all that a Church can do, by way of limiting development, to say, if you quit such and such a form of Christian doctrine, you must leave us; and it is precisely what our predecessors refused to do. The habitual use of a doctrinal designation applied to a worshipping society, or to any group of such societies, its employment in public documents (such as petitions to Parliament) proceeding from the body, cannot fail, even in the absence of limiting conditions in the trust deeds, to fix a certain stereotyped character upon the body, and to mask any wider latitude which its legal constitution may really possess. This alone is enough to check the spontaneous course of gradual change, to which surely the conservatism of reverential prepossession presents sufficient natural resistance. But it

is idle to suppose that a "Unitarian Church," no more decidedly averse to a creed than you are, will abstain from expressly constituting its new congregations on a dogmatic basis, and introducing, as is the case with a few of our existing Chapels, the name of "Unitarian" into its trust deeds; and it cannot be denied that this tying up of property by doctrine is to attach a penalty to future change, and to reverse the usage by which we have inherited from the past.

Another evil incident to the naming of a Church from a dogma is this. At different times, and in different places, the several elements of a doctrinal system will possess a a very different relative importance. Errors virulent in one country may be dormant in another, and truths which are primary in the life of one age may be quite secondary in another. If the first earnest revolt from some false or partial conception is permitted to shape itself into a church the consequence inevitably is, that when the corrective testimony has been duly delivered, the antithesis which provoked it gets softened, and the interest in it declines; the mind of a new generation passes on to other and less exhausted themes, and in dealing with its own living problems is apt to find the pledges of the antecedent period a mere dead weight of anachronism. Is it possible, for instance, to deny that the relative importance of the Unitarian controversy has materially declined within the last half century? Better insight into the origin and meaning of the Trinitarian scheme, more philosophical appreciation of its leading terms — Substance, Personality, Nature, &c.— and more sympathetic approach to the minds of living believers in it, have greatly modified our estimates, and disinclined many of us to make the rejection of the doctrine, any more than its acceptance, a condition of church communion. Where it is totally divorced, as it is generally on the Continent, and with all the newer phases of belief in and out of the English Church, from all ideas of birth-sin, of satisfaction, of election, of endless punishment,—where

it is reduced to a personal blending of the Godhead with our humanity, and applied to intensify the glory of self-sacrifice,—it leaves for some of the noblest of our men and women a larger ground of sympathy with it than the sort of miraculously-confirmed Deism which often passes under the Unitarian name. In this way, real and living concords break through the lines of nominal and comparatively formal classification. And interval of space has the same effect in this respect as change of time. In America, Unitarian doctrine has been worked out indirectly from several starting points, different from each other and from ours. By your rule they fall under the same ecclesiastical category with ourselves and with the Boston Unitarians. Yet practically, the spiritual affinity uniting us to them is far less genuine and close than we feel for other bodies of Christians of whom we cannot predicate our doctrinal name. So on the Continent, there are Protestants of rising eminence and influence in France, in Belgium, in Germany, who, it is well known, would fall under your definition of our Church. Yet they decline to identify themselves with us ; and Athanase Coquerel, partly from this feeling, refused to preach before the Unitarian Association a few months ago. They do not like our narrow theological position ; the doctrine we put forth as chief is to them but secondary. Their minds are engaged on other and more comprehensive questions ; their eye is on the future, while we are clinging to the past. I am persuaded that if the natural sympathies of the present age are to have way, and the liberal, thoughtful, earnest-minded Christians of our own and other countries are to be brought into any mutual understanding, it must be through some other agencies than the word "Unitarian" and that which it represents. Depend upon it, it no longer answers to the real, essential, living groupings of our time. As private persons, let you and me and others, by all means, bear it wherever there is occasion to mark as ours the particular opinion which it designates. But let us not attempt to

force that opinion into a relative position which it cannot make good, much less to stamp it into the essence of a Non-conformist body, whose past we thus obliterate, and whose future we restrict.

You will probably ask me, what distinctive name I would substitute for the doctrinal one? Were it particularly desirable to assume an invariable distinctive name, it would not, I think, be impossible to find one. Distinction, however, is precisely what others indeed, from their point of view, may be anxious to impose upon us; but what we should not be anxious to assume for ourselves. Our attitude ought to be just what the attitude of our founders was. "We are no sect going aside out of zeal for some fraction of doctrine to make a new and pet church of our own. We wish to stay with you, our brethren in Christ, only you will not let us; you have artifices of metaphysic by which you narrow the way of life. Our conscience cannot pass, and must seek her God alone, till you take the hindrance away, or come over to be with us where no hindrance is." Of a body that speaks thus the *differentia* is, *to have no differentia;* and therefore to eschew for itself any distinctive name, unless it be one that holds up to view its openness and catholicity. Had we a representative organization, it might be important to have such a collective name. But so long as we have to speak chiefly of individual congregations, or of the body (as on occasion of addressing the Throne) in its historical character, I am of opinion that local, accidental, traditional names, varying even at different places or times, are intrinsically preferable to precise and logical designations. If a body is to run through a long historical development, it is impossible to seize its true idea *a priori;* its essence is always coming out; and, to correspond with the reality, the name must be flexible and expansive, and must shun a precision true for to-day, but false for yesterday and to-morrow. Not being anxious to form a sect, but only, till better days, to keep open and unexclusive some little corner in the Church meant to be Universal, I am quite content

with a stock of provisional and accidental names. The mere fact that we inherit no other expresses the very genius of the large-hearted and self-renouncing Christianity from which we spring.

I must entreat your forgiveness, my dear sir, for this long infliction, far longer than I at all intended when I began. The subject has a certain melancholy interest for me; for the spirit of the time gives little encouragement to discuss it. The Unitarian Association having recently done me the honour to offer me the chair at their annual meeting, I thought it my duty, in declining, to explain the precise extent to which I could identify myself with their action; and to invite attention to the question, Whether their basis might not be advantageously enlarged? As this letter elicited no response, I suppose it was thought unadvisable to open the question which it raised; and Mr. Edgar Taylor's remark comes true, that it is vain to look to the Association itself for any reform of its own basis. Your pamphlet revived the train of thought, and made me long once more for some better life than our churches seem likely to attain. So I have visited my vain aspirations upon you.—I remain, my dear sir, very truly yours,

JAMES MARTINEAU.

Castletown of Braemar, Aberdeenshire, Aug. 6, 1859.

CHURCH-LIFE? OR SECT-LIFE?

A SECOND LETTER TO THE REV. S. F. MACDONALD, IN REPLY TO THE CRITICS OF THE FIRST.

DEAR SIR,—The few remarks which I was tempted to make on your little tract, "The Unitarian Position," have called forth such copious criticism, that it seems incumbent on me to review my own argument under the new lights it has received. And in doing so, I venture again to address myself to you; because to no one else apparently, among those who differ from me, have I succeeded in conveying my meaning clearly and without offence. My letter to you, thrown off with the haste and unreservedness of private correspondence, was perhaps ill-adapted for the ends of public exposition. But the readiness and candour with which you apprehended me, deceived me into the hope that my statement, with all its faults, would in the main be intelligible to others too, and induced me to comply with your wish for its publication. I find however by far the greater part of the replies it has received addressed to opinions which it does not contain, and which I do not hold; whilst its fundamental argument has had the misfortune to escape notice altogether. To clear the way, let me restate that argument, numbering its several propositions for convenience of reference.

I. i. Though for individual believers definite theological conviction is important to the spiritual life; and
   ii. For simultaneous fellow-worshippers a corresponding theological sympathy is indispensable;

II. i. Yet it is wrong for permanent Churches to fix their standard of belief, and commit their religious

life to the hazards of a specific type of doctrine; and

ii. *We*, in particular, cannot do so without
   1. Readopting that notion of "*Orthodoxy*" (as entering into the relation between God and man) which we profess to reject;
   2. Compelling our Church-sympathies and our natural reverence often to run across each other;
   3. Breaking with the Past from which we spring; and
   4. Compromising the Future which we prepare.

III. Hence we should beware of
   i. Accepting any doctrinal organization, however useful its functions in other respects, as representative organ of our group of congregations; and of
   ii. Distinguishing ourselves ecclesiastically from the General Christian Church by any name, unless expressing
      1. Either our historical origin,
      2. Or our refusal to limit God's grace in Christ by dogmatic conditions.

A mere glance at this abstract will show that the sole question discussed by me was this: "What is the right constitution for a Congregation or Church, which contemplates permanent existence through successive generations, and aims at living adaptation to each in turn?" And one part of my answer to the question was this: "You must provide for he development of doctrine into forms divergent from your own; as *you* also have receded in belief from forerunners whose memorials are in your grave-yards and on your chapel-walls." The possibility, nay the inevitableness, of this *succession* of different types of doctrine, I certainly maintain. But the *co-existence* of opposite beliefs, —say Trinitarian and Unitarian,—among the simultaneous

members of the same congregation, I have never contemplated; no sentence can be quoted from my letter, which gives the slightest countenance to such a proposal; on the contrary, the statement is emphatically made, that "in every Christian congregation there must be, as the ground of its internal union and external action, a fundamental agreement for the time being,—among themselves and with their minister,—as to the main features of Christian doctrine, as well as the essentials of Christian life." Judge then of my astonishment at the question put to me by one critic after another, "How can opposite believers join in the same worship?" The question is altogether irrelevant. I have never attempted to unite incompatible theologies, or to do violence to the natural affinities which bring some worshippers together and keep others apart. On the contrary, I would give the freest play to these affinities, and let them work out their own combinations, purely by the practical experience of sympathy. And it is precisely on this account, that I shrink from prejudging their possible varieties, and setting up the theological divisions of one age as valid for all time. Let each generation of Christian people dispose itself according to its own congenialities; and therefore not find itself fixed in the framework of a prior classification.

Let me then disclaim once more,—I am sorry it is not superfluous,—any objection to "a definite Unitarian theology," any desire to check its open and zealous "avowal," any approval of negligent vagueness or conscious reserve of religious conviction, any expectation of coaxing Calvinists and Arminians to worship together. I simply say to my fellow-believers, "In clearing your conscience and uttering your truth to-day, respect the conscience and the truth of to-morrow. You are mortal; the Church is immortal; your own portion of it counts, and is to count, by centuries. In your personal action on your own time, use without stint the right, discharge without fear the duties, of an ingenuous Christian soul. But in providing for the Future, which be-

longs to other consciences and not to yours,—in speaking for the Church into which you were born and from which you will die,—remember that your concern with it is not discretionary, but fiduciary; beware of entailing on it a permanent tribute to your own opinions; and see to it, that you close not against another age any door which you found open for your own." And here let me observe, that this principle is the only part of our English Presbyterian inheritance of which I have ever expressed appreciation and respect. Whether it has come down to us by intentional transmission, or by ecclesiastical accident, is of small consequence to those who value it for what it is worth, and not for whence and how it came. To represent me, therefore, as zealous for a Presbyterian revival, and full of misplaced admiration for a questionable party and an extinct age of the Church, is simply a flourish of theological rhetoric.

There is another source of misunderstanding between me and my critics, which it may be well to clear away, before proceeding further. In speaking of "our" position, "our" duty, &c., they have used their "*we*," "*us*," "*our*," with an extension different from my own. The class denoted by *their* first personal pronoun is a doctrinal class, the believers of Unitarian faith. The class denoted by *my* first personal pronoun, is an historical class, viz., that ecclesiastical family of English Nonconformists, including the dead, the living, and the unborn, which constitutes our congregational succession, and finds in our chapels and institutions its religious home. Of *this* great class I had surely reason to say that its essence was not to be found in Unitarian doctrine: but by misapplying the assertion to his own little "we," one of my critics makes me say "that it is not the essence of Unitarianism that it should remain Unitarian."* Sarcasms won by such fallacious substitutions do not help us to solve the real question: "*Which* of these two classes is the true '*We*,' to be most fitly

* Mr. Bowman's letter in the *Inquirer* of Sept. 10, p. 818.

identified with the historical life and personality of our congregations?"

Without further notice of misconceptions for which, if they are dismissed for the future, I am content to bear the blame in the past, I will now take up in succession the leading propositions in the foregoing abstract, and avail myself of the critiques upon them to give them some additional illustration.

The first (I. i.) has regard to the value of definite religious convictions, and their ingenuous avowal. Whilst I rejoice to find my critics, for the most part, satisfied with my statement on this head, I cannot accept their approval without protest against their evident surprise; or take it to myself alone, whilst others are excluded from it as "less wise." That there is any party, or fraction of a party, among us, indifferent to positive religious truth, or careless of its inculcation, I believe to be a pure fiction, contradicted by the habitual speech and action of the persons prejudiced by it. There are, doubtless, different estimates among us as to the relative interest and importance of the several parts of Christian faith: what is primary with one may be secondary with another; but if each is faithful to his own "proportion of faith," neither is entitled to charge the other with indifference.

The declaration, however, on this matter which so well satisfies most of my critics, is precisely what dissatisfies one of the most respected of them all, Mr. S. Greg.* He asks, whether, after all, it is necessary or even possible for most minds to define to themselves, with any nicety, the form and contents of their Christian faith; and whether therefore (passing on to the next proposition, I. ii.) a ground of common worship may not be found, in our simple religious needs, apart from the condition of any ascertained theological agreement.

These questions go very deep into the relation between scientific theology and the religious life; and I am truly

* Letter in the *Inquirer* of Sept. 17, p. 845.

grateful to Mr. S. Greg for raising them. In acknowledging the "spiritual necessity," which lies on "every earnest and thoughtful man" to "establish himself in clear and positive religious convictions," I did not mean to represent that necessity as equally imperative and equally searching for all. I had in view chiefly the more intellectual classes of this inquisitive age; for whom in general religion is impossible without some determinate theory on which the reason can repose. Being pressed, however, to greater fulness and exactitude of statement, I cannot hesitate to agree with Mr. S. Greg, that the religious consciousness,—the simple impulse of piety,—is usually indeterminate before it is determinate; shapes itself into a cry,—a prayer,—a trust,—before it defines itself into a thought; and in its own experiences (at once interpreting Scripture and interpreted by it) furnishes the materials which the understanding afterwards elaborates into a theology. Without presuming to deny that an opposite order is possible, viz., logical thinking first and a suitable kindling of affection afterwards, I believe the general fact to be that Feeling goes before Idea. Wherever the fresh forces of our nature are at work upon Divine things,—or, as I would rather say, wherever God's spirit is moving in the soul,—there is a dim and solemn feeling of our way out of darkness into light; and the season of deepest faith and worship is prior to the analysis of notions and determination of creed. If this be so, there must be a time in every religious movement, and there must be persons at all times, truly corresponding to Mr. S. Greg's description,—capable of profound and effectual piety, without much precision of belief, and with no exercise of judgment on its diversities. Where this is the case, do we then gain anything for the sanctities of life by flinging in among these people the spirit of critical reflection and theological comparison? I cannot think it: the "spiritual necessity" of which I speak has not yet arisen here; and it would be a wretched pedantry indeed to anticipate the crisis of "free inquiry" in a community

like this. But with the general progress of culture which takes place in a country like ours, this state of mind cannot continue; restfulness in religion is incompatible with movement in everything else; and could it even be secured, would be turned, as an incongruous exception, from a blessing into a curse. There is a necessary relation, which it is the infatuation of churches to ignore, between the modes of human faith and the general condition of the human faculties; and unless the one shares the variations of the other, the proportions of truth and nature are lost; and the sweet and noble piety of one age passes into the degrading superstition of another. In a progressive society, scepticism of inadequate beliefs is a permanent and healthful, though painful, necessity; happily followed by an equally constant emergence into higher religious apprehensions which restore the harmony. It is in this revising and reconstituting power, that Thought has its indispensable function with regard to faith; and if, through conservative fear or the luxury of sentiment, it is indolent in this field, while active in others, the blight of unfaithfulness and unreality will rest on the religion. This is "the spiritual necessity" to which I referred as urging "every earnest and thoughtful man" to definite convictions. And though it presses with very different degrees of intensity on different minds, and I am far from wishing to apply the same rule in the same measure to all, yet it surely is not too much to say, that in general the members of our congregations have too much "knowledge of good and evil" in theology to relapse into the stage of spontaneous and unreflecting piety, or dispense with the obligation of at once thinking and living out their faith into conscious clearness. I do not, indeed, deny to my friend, that we are overdone with the critical spirit; and with him I sigh for some holier and more genial season to our churches. But if the disproportion is to be remedied, it must be not by detaining the restless understanding, but by hastening the lagging love. The scientific spirit is too strong in our days to co-exist with indistinct-

ness of religious belief and teaching, or to suffer widely-divergent theologies within the same worshipping assembly. The precise degree of latitude possible without compromise of sincerity can only be determined by practical experience.

This brings me to the complaint of the *Christian Reformer*, that I have overlooked the impossibility of uniting Trinitarians and Unitarians *in worship*, and have treated the difference between them as one of *opinion* only, which a liberal spirit might be content to waive.* My first reply has been already given; I have never proposed to unite contemporaneous Trinitarians and Unitarians in the same congregation; and therefore I do not come across this difficulty about worship at all. My next reply is an appeal from mere book-theology, with its over-sharp antagonisms of doctrine, to the living facts of the world. In the development of religious belief, incompatible extremes do not stand next each other, so that the Church moves by logical leaps from full orthodoxy to the opposite heterodoxy; but the change is one of insensible transition, involving at no point any revolutionary breach of sympathy. This fact materially qualifies the conclusions we should form from mere abstract study of dogmatic antipathies. Most of our own congregations were once Trinitarian; the different members passed, with every variety of speed, into the Unitarian doctrine which now prevails; and, all through the period of transition, the phenomenon said to be impossible indisputably existed; some Trinitarians habitually worshipped with some anti-Trinitarians. And are we now, in proud consciousness of superior light, to pronounce that partnership a sin?

So much for the conditional clauses (I.) of the argument. In the opening of its consequent members (II. i.) I very inadequately pointed out what seems to me the essential distinction between other Christian bodies and our own; a distinction which, if it holds, ought to lead us not to imitate their methods, but to reverse them. What is a Church?

* *Christian Reformer* for Oct., p. 610.

A Society for realizing harmony or reconciliation between Man and God. And in constituting it, how are we to draw the line between the essence which we must secure and the accidents which we may leave free? By looking to the terms of this reconciliation; taking them all in, as indispensable to the end in view; and leaving out all else, be it ever so intrinsically good in other relations. It is in obedience to this principle that most Christians have embodied in their ecclesiastical constitution a scheme of doctrine: not because that scheme was *true*, but because without faith in it *there was no reconciliation*. It stood there as the primary means of grace, as making the difference between a soul lost and a soul redeemed; and had its claim been other than this, had it been simply sound belief or even revealed knowledge, momentous to the mind but without this paramount relation to the spiritual life, it would have remained among non-essentials. Now what in our view is the error of these Christians? Not surely that they ground their society upon the need, and find its essence in the appointed way, of harmonized relations between God and man; but that, among the terms of that harmony, they include states of belief which turn out to be significant of nothing spiritual, and destitute of constraining evidence; so that they may be present or absent without determining anything respecting the life and love of God within the soul. We justly complain of this "orthodox" constitution of a Church, that it reckons among "essentials" what is really neutral with regard to our union with God. Do we not, however, fall into the very same error, if we set up as our essential a doctrine, like that of the Unipersonality of God? Does its belief turn the scale between the life of sinful distance from him, and the life of conscious nearness to him? Can we say that sanctity and self-sacrifice, and all that makes us akin to him, are even usually rarer among Trinitarians than among ourselves? Are we prepared to set down the doctrine of the Trinity with the sins and impieties that alienate us from Him?—or the opposite doctrine with the

graces and affections that renew his image in us? If not, then this dogmatic distinction has no more business at the foundation of a Christian Church than the other scheme whose "essentiality" we justly impugn. Nothing has any right to such a place, except the indispensable conditions of that harmony with God in which the gospel of Christ attains its end. Christianity is a divine dispensation for bringing men into conscious union with the Holiest of all, with the Father through the Son: a Church is an institution embodying and applying the distinctively Christian requisites to this end,—the dying away to sin and self, and the rising into strength, goodness and love by filial surrender to the Perfect Will. To these (in the fundamental bases of the Church) nothing must be added; from these nothing may be taken; they are to stand clear of everything else, and bear witness to the world of the one way which it is darkness and death to miss. Subsidiary aids,—such as a rational theory of the Divine nature and of the person of Christ,—are deserving of high consideration as accessories, and, in the practical administration of the Church by the free conscience of successive generations, must enter largely into its action and expression: but to that secondary position they must be religiously kept, unless the Church is to betray its spiritual function, and sink into a Theological Institute.

I think it will be admitted that this at least gives us a clear intelligible rule for distinguishing between the "open questions" and the immutable basis of a Church,—a rule fairly drawn from the idea and object of such an association. If you reject this rule, you will want some other; and I know of none that will not draw the line in a manner perfectly arbitrary; not having the whole uniting force of the spiritual affections on one side, and the mental variables on the other; but running somewhere across the field of intellectual differences in theology, and ever liable to shift with the movable accentuation of conviction and controversy. The great strength of the Unitarian protest against the creeds has always seemed to me to lie, not so much in the

logic directed against their truth, as in the moral and religious appeal against their pretended essentiality. There are comparatively few who will follow you into the evidences on so deep a question, and commit themselves to a verdict on the case. But there are thousands ready with a response when you ask whether it is possible that these subtleties, which they fear to touch, can really mingle with the essential conditions of Divine grace. Here you reach at once the deep and ineradicable sense of the Divine justice and love, and win, not an answer from the intellect, but an Amen from the soul. And this is our proper attitude before the great heart of the struggling world. With the theologian, discuss the controversy with all care, and say "Your doctrine is not true." But before the open face of mankind go to the churches and say, "Your doctrine is intrusive, and you have no right to put it where it is: people may find God with it; they can find Him also without it: cease to narrow the way of life." In so speaking however we surely should remember that this argument of neutrality cuts both ways; and a doctrine which it is simply non-essential to affirm it cannot be essential to deny.

To make the Unitarian doctrine therefore the essence of our church appears to me to imply, unless we surrender the whole idea of a church, a re-adoption of that very notion of *Orthodoxy* (as entering into the relation between God and man) which we profess to reject.

And now I come to the topic in my letter, which seems to have most touched the sensitiveness of my critics. A doctrinal basis, I remarked, would compel our Church sympathies and our natural reverence often to run across each other (II. ii. 2). Now in order to prove this point, what did I require? Did I want instances in which my sect-sympathies and my natural reverence *run together?* Did not the exigency of the argument demand, on the contrary, a selection of cases in which the two feelings traverse each other? To such cases then I confined myself, not because there was no opposite class, but because these alone had

any pertinence; and it never occurred to me that a reader could mistake these illustrative examples for a balanced confession of my mental history. Yet this list of acknowledgments, in which I have recorded certain obligations to Trinitarians, and certain disappointments in Unitarians, has been made the ground of the strangest complaints.* "It is so one-sided":—as if to make it "other-sided" would not simply have destroyed its relevance. "It picks out all the uninteresting Unitarian bodies, about which nobody much cares":—as if this were not the very point to be made out, that often Unitarianism came in a form with which it was impossible to sympathize. "It disparagingly omits all mention of Milton, Locke, Newton, Priestley, Channing, Lindsey, Armstrong, &c.":—as if their omission from a list of persons with whom I *could not sympathize* were not the sign that *with them I do sympathize.* "It is plain from all this that Mr. Martineau loves and admires nothing Unitarian." Why, what is my argument in this very place?—that the two classifications, viz., that of theological agreement, and that of heartfelt reverence, *often cross one another:* which surely means, that they run neither constantly together nor constantly apart; but bring me to love and venerate *some* Trinitarians and *some* Unitarians. And who those Unitarians chiefly are is no matter, as my critics are well aware, of doubtful inference; for from my youth up it has been my joy to own, in words which they have heard or seen, an ineffaceable debt to Priestley, to Carpenter, to Channing.

In the selection of examples to illustrate this point I was necessarily limited to the narrow range of my own reading: had this been more extensive, doubtless happier instances might have been found. Yet why my critics should think it paradoxical in me to admire Calvin's skill as an Interpreter, and in this relation to couple his name with Whitby's, I am unable to discover. As far as I understand the logic

* *Inquirer* of Sept. 3, p. 786. Ibid. Sept. 10, p. 810. Mr. Bowman's Letter in do. p. 818. *Christian Reformer* for Oct., p. 612, seqq.

of the objection it is of this nature: "How can Calvin explain the Epistle to the Romans? Did he not burn Servetus?" "Calvin was a Necessarian; Mr. Martineau is not: how can the one help the other through Philippians?" "Whitby died in 1726, recanting his Trinitarianism, and begging that his commentary might be altered accordingly; is it not then a blunder to cite the *un*altered Commentary of 1703 as a sample of Trinitarian interpretation?"* These are arguments which I cannot answer. And as to the dissimilarity between these two theologians, it is precisely what recommended to me their combination: to mention two Athanasians, or two ante-Nicenes, would have been a practical tautology; and it is just the contrast of their theology which favourably tells upon their exegesis in different portions of Scripture. In regard to the great Swiss reformer a startling judgment of Mr. Hallam's is quoted against me; † a judgment so strangely inapplicable to writings notoriously consulted, translated, republished to this hour, terse and lucid in their language, and singularly free from scholastic repulsiveness, that I wondered to think how great historians, like great poets, could sometimes doze. On turning to the page however (to which the *Christian Reformer* did not help me by any reference) I find the persons of whom Mr. Hallam is speaking thus introduced: "These elder champions of a long war,

* *Inquirer* of Sept. 3, p. 786. *Christian Reformer*, Oct., p. 614.

† "Of Calvin and his contemporaries we may say, in the striking language of the late Mr. Hallam (who quotes Eichhorn as an authority for the statement), 'They belong no more to man, but to the worm, the moth and the spider. Their dark and ribbed backs, their yellow leaves, their thousand folio pages, do not more repel us than the unprofitableness of their substance. Their prolixity, their barbarous style' (this is certainly not attributable to Calvin), 'the perpetual recurrence, in many, of syllogistic forms, the reliance by way of proof on authorities that have been abjured, the temporary and partial disputes, which can be neither interesting nor always intelligible at present, must soon put an end to the activity of the most industrious scholar.'"—*Christian Reformer*, p. 615.

especially the Romish, are, *with very few exceptions*, known only by their names and lives. These are they, and many more there were down to the middle of the seventeenth century, at whom, along the shelves of an ancient library, we look and pass by. They belong no more, &c." Nor is it left doubtful who is to be reckoned with the "very few exceptions": for on the same page Mr. Hallam says: "Calvin" (as compared with the contemporary reformers) "*stands on higher ground.* His Institutes are still in the hands of that numerous body who are usually denominated from him."* If however Mr. Hallam does not speak at all of Calvin in the passage selected by the *Christian Reformer*, in another, with the help of Scaliger, he draws the very portrait of him that we want,—in his attitude of Scriptural Expositor. "In the critical and expository department of theological literature, much was written during this period, forming no small proportion of the great collection called Critici Sacri. In the Romish Church we may distinguish the Jesuit Maldonat, whose commentaries on the Evangelists have been highly praised by theologians of the Protestant side; and among these we may name Calvin and Beza, who occupy the highest place." In confirmation of this estimate the following note is added: "Literas sacras," says Scaliger of Calvin, "tractavit ut tractandæ sunt, vere inquam et pure ac simpliciter, sine ullis argutationibus scholasticis; et divino vir præditus ingenio multa divinavit quæ non nisi a linguæ Hebraicæ peritissimis (cujusmodi tamen ipse non erat) divinari possunt."†

Such is the verdict of the greatest of the elder scholars cited by the most judicious of the new. If, as my critic

* "Literature of Europe," Vol. I. p. 517.

† "The sacred Scriptures, in Calvin's hands, were treated as they ought to be, with pure, true, genuine exposition, clear of scholastic wranglings: and with the divination of a genius more than human he seized on many a meaning open only to the most finished Hebrew scholars, without however being one himself."—"Literature of Europe," Vol. II. pp. 129, 130.

says, Calvin is "more quoted than read," Hallam, it would seem, is sometimes more read than quoted. A better testimony than even his is within reach of any York student who will take from his shelves his notes of Mr. Wellbeloved's theological lectures; whose high estimate of Calvin's expository writings remained in my memory till I could see for myself the firm mastery with which they seize and hold the thread of thought they trace, with what logical apprehension they measure the relation of the parts to the whole, how deep their glimpses into religious psychology, and how direct and precise their style.

I will not detain you with any vindication of the other admirations I ventured to avow. But it is incumbent on me to advert to one or two phrases to which exception has been taken, as disparaging to the faith which I myself hold. "What more injurious description of Unitarianism," says the *Christian Reformer*, "could be penned than that it is a 'sort of miraculously confirmed Deism'"? * I pray you to observe that this description is *not* applied by me to "Unitarianism," but to something "which *often passes under the Unitarian name*,"—a phraseology surely implying that the name is rather questionably stretched beyond its average meaning when used to cover the case contemplated. The type of doctrine to which I thus refer as existing, but exceptional, among Unitarians, should have been called, says my critic, "*Theism*,"—the word for positive belief in God,—not "*Deism*,"—the word for rejection of Christianity." Certainly a "miraculously confirmed rejection of Christianity" would be something original, and the oddity of the combination, had I made it, might have justified, though it hardly would have needed, the editor's rebuke. I cannot however accept his correction, which totally alters, not to say expunges, the meaning I intended to convey: and I must adhere to a form of words selected purely for its scientific precision. Let us go at once to the most recent and special authority as to the use of these words,

* p. 612.

—the Author of the "History of English Deism" (1841). "The word *Deism*," says Lechler, "denotes a certain mode of thinking respecting God and his relation to the universe in general: as opposed to *Atheism*, it recognizes the real existence of God: as opposed to *Pantheism*, it recognizes his distinctness from the universe, holds his existence to be supramundane, but conceives of the Godhead as standing in an external relation to the universe, not merely distinct, but separate from it, as though its course, once creatively set up, went regularly on, without further interference of His, according to Laws of Nature established at the first; whilst *Theism*, on the other hand, thinks of the Living God as in continuous, living and inner relation to the universe, so that he every moment acts to sustain and rule both creation as a whole and all single creatures in it."* It appears then that if I wished (as I did) to mark the mechanical theory of the universe which dispenses with God except as First Cause, and considers Divine Influence disproved wherever Law prevails, I could use no other word than *Deism*: and had I substituted *Theism*, I should have indicated a doctrine of God the exact opposite of what I meant. Now can any reader of our literature, especially of the last century,—can any observer of still existing modes of thought among us,—say that this theory is unknown to Unitarianism? or deny that where it exists, the miracles are looked upon as the attesting "interposition," if not of a naturally absent, of an otherwise personally inoperative God? The truth is, the elder generation of Unitarians did not differ, *in their Theory of Natural Religion*, from the class of writers known as the English Deists: they had the same modes of viewing the questions respecting the existence and government of God, the relation between Morals and Religion, the rational evidence of a Future Life. The *things believed* by them were very much the same; but when it came to the *grounds of belief*, the miraculous credentials stepped in, and gave Christian

* "Herzog's Real-Enclycopädie." Art. Deismus, by Lechler. 1855.

authority to what else would have been without it. This is the state of things which I intended to mark; and the phrase employed to denote it will bear, I believe, the strictest tests of accuracy.

A still more marvellous susceptibility has been awakened by another clause of the letter, in which I speak of the doctrine of the Divine Unity as not exclusively Christian, but "belonging also to Judaism, to Islam, and to simple Deism"; and on that account as less interesting to a disciple of Christ, and less fitted to supply a designation for his church, than the special characteristics of the gospel. "I love rather" (this was my sentiment) "that which we have in common with our fellow-disciples, notwithstanding their Trinity, than that which we have in common with Jews, notwithstanding their Unity: and I think it unfortunate for a Christian church to have its name from the latter rather than from some element of the former." This, which is the simple statement and analysis of an indisputable fact, is strangely said to be a "rhetorical" slur upon the doctrine of the divine Unity; the defence of which is accordingly taken in hand in the following way:—First, it is affirmed that the doctrine *is* Christian, because taught by Jesus Christ;—which I had not denied, but also affirmed, in saying that Christianity *had it* in common with certain other religions. Next, it is said to be an unworthy reflection on *our* Unity of God to confound it with that of the Jews, &c. Well; if so, the doctrine is *not the same* as theirs. But then, finally, it is urged, that the doctrine is none the "worse for being held by Jews, &c."; in which case the doctrine *is* the same with theirs.* This reasoning I should perhaps find more convincing, if the offence against which it is directed had been made intelligible to me: but I can assure my critics that, after repeated and open attention to their statements, their complaint speaks to me in an unknown tongue. Trying to meet their feeling in the dark, I

* *Christian Reformer*, p. 613. Also Report of Speeches at the London District Unitarian Society, in the *Inquirer* of Sept. 10.

can only say that I did not dream of "disparaging" the doctrine of the divine Unity, in which I myself believe: for surely it is no disparagement of truths to find their relative order of significance and importance *for a particular end.* I should have said the very same thing, only still more strongly, of a prior and more momentous truth, the *Existence* of God: its very magnitude and extension over all religions, whilst in one view making it supreme, unfitting it in another to penetrate and bind men together. Something closer and less spacious is needed for the warm retreats of human affection. Am I chargeable, in saying this, with "depreciating" the first truth of all religion? The problem before me was to find the intensest focus of the Christian consciousness, the true centre of sympathy for a company of disciples intent on being a living embodiment of the gospel. And it seemed one step towards a solution to say, "In proportion as you give prominence to what Christianity has in common with several religions, you go away from your point; in proportion as you press inward to the special essence which is found nowhere else, and which warms the Christian genius in all its strongest manifestations, will you draw near to the desired end."

On the next point in the argument (II. ii. 3, 4),—that, by constituting a church upon a doctrine we break with the past whence we spring, and compromise the future which we prepare,—I do not find any answer attempted. The open constitution which we have inherited is considered the mere weakness of a period without definite theology;* it is not, therefore (we are told), an exceptional excellence to be preserved,—as constitutional statesmen would preserve a free press; but an infirm want of rule, to be replaced by some better security for "truth,"—as "positive" governors get rid of the "negative" liberty of printing, and lay a careful substratum of sound principle below all the action of opinion. Let this fact, then, be clearly understood; for it is nothing else than an entire revolution in the

* *Inquirer* of Sept. 10, p. 809.

ideas and constitution of our body: that it is deliberately proposed to discard the rule, and what is still more important, the temper, which have been the instruments of our progress hitherto, and now to shut up at Unitarianism; to turn a waiting and watching Church into a made-up Sect. The plea so elaborately worked out, for the Courts of Equity in the Hewley case, and for Parliamentary debate on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill,—that our body had a conscience against closing theological questions and especially this Trinitarian controversy,—this plea, so eloquently urged by Follett and Gladstone on our behalf, having answered its temporary end, is discarded, and treated by ourselves with the same contempt, nay, assailed with the very same arguments, to which hostile counsel and a hostile judge long ago accustomed us. My protest against this is strangely described as a proposal to "change our fundamental principles," to innovate upon a "time-honoured" usage and name, and to do something very restless or very eccentric. It is, on the contrary, an expression of fidelity to principles inherent, till recent times, in the very life of our body, acted on without noise in former generations, professed and violated in this; it is a "standing upon the old paths"; a warning against the surrender of a modest but sincere catholicity for an unnatural imitation of the sect-life of our country. For my own part, I am content with the function which the Providence of history has assigned us in English society; and I believe that by simply developing its resources without changing its character we have fitting work for all our faculty, our piety, our love. I do not believe in the raising up of churches by the machinery of human will which creates political and civil leagues; nor would I enroll myself a member of one which, by its first principle, shut out and disowned the patriarchs of our holy land. A Unitarian church, it is plain, is not *their* church. Why compel us to quit their communion, as a condition of fellowship with Priestley and Channing? Are we to look up at the faces of Baxter, of Heywood, of Henry, still hanging on our

walls, and to say, "We have made a great discovery about you, that you did not worship the same God with us, and were in fact idolaters; your inheritance, your memorials, are with us; but you are not of the same Church with us; and we cast out your names among the aliens"? We must either do this, or must revert to the acknowledgment that within the limits of the same ecclesiastical communion, a wide sweep, not of Christian opinion only, but of Christian worship, may historically take place in an innocent and holy way.

But there is said to be a plain contradiction in my pleading for an open theology which shall not commit the Future, while at the same time approving of distinct conviction and teaching in the Present. The two things are pronounced incompatible. Who, it is said, will care to define what is not to stand? Who will have the zeal to set up as divine truth to-day what may disappear with the shifting sands of human opinion to-morrow? If we may not regard as settled even the great doctrine which, since Priestley's time, has stood its ground among us, where are we to rest at all? Are we to be ever learning? and is our creed never to be fixed?*

On this point let us first call a witness whom my critics will hear not less willingly than I, and who certainly did not fail in either distinctness of theology or ingenuousness of speech. "Much stress has been laid by several of my opponents," says Dr. Priestley, "on my frank acknowledgment to Dr. Price, that 'I did not know when my creed would be fixed.' This, however, I must continue to say, while I continue my inquiries, and profess, as every fair inquirer will do, to be determined by any new and stronger evidence that shall be presented to me. And this is certainly no disadvantage to my readers, who, I hope, will not be moved by my *authority*, but only by the *evidence* that I lay before them; and *that* will always be the same, and

* Mr. Bowman's Letter. *Inquirer* of Sept. 110, p. 818.

have the same weight, though my idea of its weight should change ever so often.

"Did not *Luther* go on changing his opinions till a very late period of his life, and was he ever reproached with it, except by the Catholic party, whose spirit, I am sorry to say, is too apparent in the defenders of the church establishment of this country? But similar situations will dictate similar modes of thinking and reasoning. Was it not highly honourable in Dr. Whitby, at a late period of a life devoted to study, and after having repeatedly defended the doctrine of the *Trinity*, to declare himself an *Arian*, and to defend that opinion in his 'Last Thoughts'? Equally honourable was the change of opinion of the late excellent Bishop of Carlisle, who from being an *Arian* became a *Socinian*, and in the last edition of his 'Considerations,' &c., carefully expunged every passage that had expressed his belief of the pre-existence of Christ. Let me class with such men as these, and not with those who are determined to hold their present opinions, whatever they be, at all events, and who shut their ears to all conviction; for such must be all those who censure my conduct."—Theological and Miscellaneous Works of Dr. Priestley, Vol. XVIII. p. 491.

Just and noble as these sentiments are, they overshoot the requirements of my argument. I have never expressed disapproval of the *individual* "fixing his creed": were I even to think it a disease or a sin for a man to change his opinions after thirty, it would make no difference in anything I have said. My protest is against *a church* fixing its creed, *i.e.*, against a prior generation of life-tenants prejudging the convictions of a posterior, and using their own rights to the restriction of their posterity's. I know well that to believe a thing true is to believe it immutable; that earnest conviction naturally excludes all suspicion of possible change, and carries in it a confidence of spreading to other minds, and attaining universal recognition. Within the limits of his proper rights, I would have every man surrender himself freely to these impressions, utter them, and

act upon them. But limits there certainly are to his proper rights in this respect; arising partly from the presence around him of his fellows with precisely similar feeling attached to different beliefs; partly from the certainty of successors whose faculties and opportunities are not his to mortgage. There is a point at which the unrestrained yielding to his feeling of assurance would begin to encroach upon the sacred ground of his neighbours and his heirs; and at this point he must arrest his eagerness, and withhold his foot from trespass. Where exactly this point lies it is a matter of some nicety to determine: but this at least is plain; that those acts which a man performs, not as a private person, but in his capacity as member of a social body stretching indefinitely beyond the term of his own life, are *not* at the disposal of his individuality, but must be restrained by respect for the equally legitimate individualities to come. He may impress his character and convictions, with all the moral force he has, upon his contemporaries, and, through their propagated sympathy and his own recorded thought, upon posterity: but he has no right to take up the properties, the institutions, the spiritual organisms of the Past, and carve his name or motto on their open brow: he has no right to pledge the future, under penalties, to repeat and perpetuate his thought. Can any just man deny this principle? or any reasonable man doubt that, of all the cases that fall under it, *Church-action* is among the clearest? and that if, receiving our temple entablature clear and fair, we have it cut into and marked with the symbols of our personal opinion, we plainly violate the rule? And am I gravely told that it is impossible for us to care about our own truth, unless we may "fix" and rivet it on the neck of future generations? that we can have no spirit to trust in its permanence, if we do not make some provision against its change? What is this but a repudiation of the moral limits which attach to every exercise of right?

It is one of the strangest features of the present dis-

cussion, that my critics treat me as wishing to enlarge or exaggerate the limits of individual liberty, to emancipate persons of restless intellect from all check of steady reverence, and establish among us the utmost egotism of "Free Inquiry." My whole protest, on the contrary, has been directed from first to last against the unwarrantable license of Individualism, and the selfish usurpations of temporary opinions, encroaching on what is not theirs: my whole desire has been to restore some restraints of reverence for rights other than our own; for a future beyond our reparations; for the Church of Christ that embraces us; for the Providential Laws of our humanity. The thought of my heart has been simply this: "We are not our own, to do as we like or as we feel, and take no notice whose we are, whence we come, and whither we go: we belong to a holy Society, into which we are woven in many a fibre, and must beware lest we spoil and stiffen the pattern of its beauty: let us not live for the present, as if there were to be no others than we, but wield our power with a pious self-restraint." I see plainly that when men fling themselves without reserve upon their personal convictions, without looking beyond their own inner feeling of assurance, they are apt to lose all respect for any conscience but their own, to overstrain the natural rights of their earnestness, and become bigots to their contemporaries, and legislators for the minds of their successors. Their aggressions upon their living neighbours, by provoking resistance, carry with them to some extent their own check and cure. But their invasion of the Future, which cannot cry aloud for help, is more difficult to meet: respect for silent and invisible rights does not easily touch minds shut up with some strong persuasion. This is the feeling which I would fain not see die among us. In a body that has gone through a history like ours, personal intensity of belief ought not to be irreconcilable with the recognition of a law of change. However disposed I may individually be to rely on the immutability of my own faith

as the objective truth of God, how can I study the Past, and see the gradual evolution of new types of belief, in spite of this untiring confidence of stability, without qualifying my first feeling, and owning a double obligation, viz., of veracious witness to the Present, and of self-denying abstinence from the reserved rights of the Future? It is this latter duty on which I have chiefly dwelt; and how this protest against a blind selfishness, this plea for others against ourselves, this endeavour to set bounds to individual impulse by some sense of social reverence, can appear to any one a mere outbreak of wanton license, I am perplexed to understand.

Permit me, as I am on this topic, to go beyond the immediate occasion, and speak a more general word in reference to this whole class of misrepresentations. No one more heartily despises than I do the proposal to raise a Church upon the mere basis of "Free Inquiry." No one more deeply feels that the merging of self-will is the first act of all devout life, and the indispensable condition of all Christian union. If there is one modern tendency more than another against which I have striven through life, with the united earnestness of natural instinct and deliberate conviction, it is the extreme Individualism which turns our foremost politics, philosophy, religion into a humiliating caricature. There are, however, two ways of protesting against Individualism. You may do it by taking my hand and leading me back with you from the fretful foreground of human contention into the inner harmonies of divine communion, where differences beween soul and soul sincerely melt away, and there is no surrender of either to the other, but of both to God. Or, keeping to the dogmatic front of things, you may try to make me ashamed of my personal belief, offering me a retreat in your own "individualism," if I can find myself at home there; but prepared, if I cannot, to complain of mine, and moralize on the perversity of mankind. The latter is the way of party self-assertion, by which the gentler individualities are

simply crushed beneath the stronger, and no one is lifted into any higher sphere. The former seems to me the way of God's own spirit, by which he draws us out of our notional conceits into a living fellowship. I believe in no blending power but this. Religious union is not to be brought about, like a railway pacification, by competitive triumphs, or negotiated compromise, but by the spontaneous relapse of divergent thoughts upon some point of all-absorbing piety.

I now come to the practical conclusion drawn from the foregoing argument; and first, that we should beware of accepting any doctrinal organization, however useful its function in other respects, as representative organ of our group of congregations (III. i.). This obliges me to speak of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association; and I shall perhaps most suitably explain myself, if I here introduce the letter addressed to Mr. Aspland, as Secretary, in March last, in reply to the Committee's request that I would take the chair at the Annual Meeting.

"My Dear Sir,—So lively is my sense of the honour conferred upon me by the request of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association Committee, and so hearty is my inclination to respond to the friendly feeling which it expresses, that I narrowly escape the danger of acting, under the influence of so genial an appeal, against a serious and permanent conviction. But I remember that I have to deal with those who can understand a conscientious scruple, and who will not attribute my respectful refusal of their request to any personal coldness towards the objects of our common zeal.

"The plain truth is, that, ever since the Hewley case brought out into clear light the history and essential basis of our churches, my eyes have seemed to be opened to a fundamental error (natural to us all at the time) in the constitution of the British and Foreign Unitarian Association.

The paramount object of the Association is the defence and propagation of a special (and most important) doctrine, under some or other of its Christian types. With this object is conjoined another—viz., the ecclesiastical union and representation of our Churches, which are encouraged to seek in the Association the organ of their common action, and to regard its annual meeting as the expression of their common feeling. Both these objects,—the assertion by its believers of a distinctive theology and the organic union of an historical family of churches,—are of high importance. In *other* religious bodies,—bodies whose origin and constitution are dogmatic and restrictive,—the two may be pursued together, one and the same organization serving for both. But, if it be true that our distinctive character has been, and is to be, the openness and unexclusiveness of our Christian theology, it clearly cannot be so with us; and the attempt to unite the two involves forgetfulness of our history and loss of our identity, in order to fall undistinguished into the competing crowd of sects. We are bound by our past to make not doctrinal limitation, but doctrinal *breadth*,—a breadth wide enough to include our forefathers' Trinitarian faith,—the condition of our common life and action. With this inherited obligation, it would be plainly inconsistent to recognize the Unitarian Association as our ecclesiastical organ, with congregations as its members, and ministers as its official deputies. Yet such is the character assigned to it by its published constitution.

"Were it simply a private society of individual believers united in defence of a distinctive doctrine (like the old Unitarian Fund), I should feel that its function was perfectly legitimate. It is the attempt, in doing this, *also* to become the organ of a body proud of its catholic and open theology that, in my opinion, places it in a false position.

"In saying this, I am confessing my own sins, and expressing my own repentance. The Irish Unitarian Society,

—devised mainly by me when I was in Dublin,—is liable to the very same objection. There were few of us at that time who saw beyond the immediate stage which our religious history had reached. But I have reason to know that the chief founders of the Unitarian Association became well aware in their latter days of the error which had been committed, and regretted it as I do my own. Mr. Edgar Taylor assured me, in some of the last conversations and correspondence I had with him, that he had ceased to regard the Association as fitted for more than provisional service, unless his successors should have the wisdom to reconstitute it on a basis more true to our religious history and social function.

"Of the liberal administration of affairs under your present Committee, no stronger proof could be given than the arrangements proposed for the present year; and were not my difficulty founded in the permanent written constitution of the Association, my confidence in the spirit and the *personnel* of the Committee would at once induce my compliance with your wish. And if, as I understand is the case with the American Unitarian Association,* there were any prospect of such a revision as would widen it in correspondence with our present wants and apprehensions, I should gladly waive all present scruples, and take the future on trust. But, under the existing organic laws, regarded as given facts, I feel precluded, by deep attachment to an historical trust, from that partnership in contemporary action, which, from my heart, I earnestly desire.—I remain," &c.

From this letter,—more clearly, perhaps, than from my recent one to you,—it will be evident that I had no objection to the *name* of the Association, considered as an engine "for the promotion of Unitarian Christianity." I remember perfectly the fact of which "An Old Unitarian,"

* For reasons unknown to me the intention here referred to has since been postponed or relinquished.

reminds me,* that in the Association were amalgamated three prior societies, all with Unitarian objects. The doctrinal title was naturally perpetuated in the more comprehensive organization; and to this not the slightest objection could be made, provided no new function were taken on, and the larger area opened were only the three lesser fields thrown into one. I approve the objects of those three societies, taken one by one; I cannot but approve them taken all together; and I needed only the assurance that the pretensions of the Association go no farther, to cancel every scruple. I was under the impression, however, that the Association aspired to a character never claimed by these earlier societies—viz., that of representative and organ of our group of churches. I was sure that it is so regarded by a large proportion of its supporters. I thought this impression inevitable from the provision in the rules for enrolling *congregations*, as well as individuals, among the members. I saw that the natural effect of successful zeal on the part of the Committee must be to give wider operation to this provision, and make it an invidious thing for a congregation or minister to remain "unattached"; so that it was scarcely possible for the Association to avoid assuming an ecclesiastical character, whether intended or not. It was against this extension of function that all my objection lay: for *this*, the doctrinal name, far from being imperative, was a constitutional disqualification. The alternative, then, was this: either a doctrinal Association which is in no way ecclesiastical, or an ecclesiastical which is not doctrinal.

There are two ways in which this objection might be met:—by disputing its principle; and by denying its facts. I can understand a critic who avowedly wishes to unite the theological and the ecclesiastical function in one and the same agency. I can understand a critic who disclaims for the Unitarian Association any tendency to a representative ecclesiastical function at all. But to what purpose am

* Letter in *Inquirer* of Sept. 3, p. 794.

I told that the Association does not affect to represent churches that *do not like it and pay nothing to its funds?** This, I presume, is the case with all voluntary associations; and the free money qualification settles nothing respecting the wisdom of their basis and the consistency of their aims. There is no protest, however reasonable and conscientious, that may not, like Mr. Armstrong's remonstrance with the Borough Road School Society, be thrust out with the remark, "It is your own affair whether you pay or not; if you don't like us, you can keep to yourselves." But this remark is not felt to be satisfactory as either vindication of principle or denial of fact. Does Mr. Aspland's disclaimer mean more than this?—does he renounce, on behalf of the Association, all provision in its constitution, all wish in its administration, for a representative position, in relation to our group of churches? Then he had only to say so in a sentence in order to sweep my objection away, by removing the assumed fact on which it rested. As my letter to him received no reply, it was evident to me, on the one hand, that I had not misconstrued the facts; and on the other, that the Committee saw no reason to open with their subscribers the question of principle which I had raised. This silence of the Secretary I do not at all refer to as a matter of personal complaint. Indeed, the answer which I got at last,—the insinuation that I wanted to be "negotiated with,"—might well have borne a longer delay. If the hope ever occurred to me that the subject of my letter might not entirely sleep, it was only because the question involved in it was of general concern, and the difficulty which weighed upon me was notoriously shared by many others, and had been felt by some of the founders of the Association themselves; so that the misgiving I expressed might possibly find some responsive feeling among the members of the Committee. *Had it been so,* I presume they would no more "have been untrue to their duty" in bringing their rules of congregational represen-

* *Christian Reformer*, p. 616.

tation under discussion at the general meeting, after suitable preliminary conference among friends, than in proposing the other alterations of rule which they actually recommended and carried at that meeting. In the absence of any sympathy with my scruples, such a course certainly did not at all lie within their obligations; but neither did it lie beyond their competency. If the Committee is precluded, "in its corporate capacity, from even discussing"* my wish to sever the theological from the ecclesiastical function of the Association, how was it that the late Mr. Aspland, in forming "an English Presbyterian Union" on a large scale, "*got the Unitarian Association Committee to originate the matter?*"† The late Mr. Aspland, it appears, felt the necessity, and the Committee of the Association found the power, of doing the very thing which it is now an offence for me to propose, and an impossibility for them "even to discuss!"

I know not, my dear sir, how it may strike you; but to me, I confess, this little fact respecting the late Mr. Aspland appears indicative of some misgiving as to the representative adequacy of the Unitarian Association,—the practical acknowledgment of a function in relation to our churches, which its dogmatical name and constitution disqualified it for performing. Yet my statement that, in common with Mr. Edgar Taylor, he latterly thought the doctrinal name a disastrous mistake, and, having perceived the error, wished not to make the Association the representative organ of our body, is called in question by those who certainly are best entitled to report his opinions.‡ To the testimony of his sons on such a subject I unreservedly defer: against any evidence they may possess I have nothing to offer, beyond the information I received from his friend and coadjutor, Mr. Edgar Taylor; whose own opinions, again, as reported by me, are equally called in question by "An

* *Christian Reformer*, p. 619. † *Christian Reformer*, p. 617.
‡ Ibid, p. 617.

Old Unitarian."* Writing to you from the country, at a distance from my papers, I could only speak from memory of the "conversations and correspondence" of 1838–9. I have since looked again into the memorials of that time; and a few sentences from them will throw light upon the opinions then prevailing at the head-quarters of our religious body. In a letter dated December 29, 1838, Mr. Edgar Taylor says:—

"I have long considered the Unitarian Association to require altogether re-casting (if it be considered desirable to attempt to make it the general representation of our body, which its origin never aimed at); by abolishing in particular, its proselyting character; and, as to its books, by supplying access to books, not merely proselyting and controversial tracts, but of far higher and more general value, in a devotional, practical, and theological character. If our Catalogue is to be acknowledged as supplying what our denomination wants, as a denomination, we must rank very low indeed in the eyes of those who peruse it.

"I however very much doubt whether it is the least prudent or desirable to make any such use of the old Association. It is not very likely that the members will ever agree to alter it to the extent wanted; and its *Name* and associations would render it difficult to make it of use; especially when we consider that a very large proportion of our body never have had anything to do with it, and many think it always did harm. I know more than one of its first formers and most active supporters, who now think they were wrong from the beginning; but it would be far more wrong to insist on endeavouring to make an institution of the sort the representation of the body itself. The polemic name is in itself a disadvantage and restraint, a preliminary repulsion of many of our friends, and a note of offence and attack to the rest of the world."

He then urges the necessity of finding some "far better rallying point and machinery for general union, on princi-

* Letter in *Inquirer* of Sept. 3, p. 794.

ples far wider than the propagation of Unitarianism as a creed; with a *Name*, which, as a *neutral* one (merely descriptive and not theological), would remove the antagonistic and offensive character of a body named from a dogma"; "leaving direct proselytism to the Association (if kept up), or to any special society taking up such objects." "I really think," he says, "something of this sort the only effectual and creditable way of getting us out of our difficulties, and that it furnishes the only chance of escaping disunion and ruin."

He then speaks with strong disapprobation of the Aggregate Meeting of 1838, and specially of the transgression of their proper functions by the Unitarian Association Committee in convening it. "The Association Committee are not the party to determine the general interests of our body; nor are the subscribers generally; they are only *a part* of the body, and their business is to attend to the interests of their Society. Whereas the prior question is, whether such an Association ever was or ever can be a general representation of us. There will probably be many who will contend, and have a right to contend, for the preservation of its original objects; and I don't see that we have any business to oppose *their* doing so, who choose to support them." But "a central rallying-point, I am sure, will be wanted; and *that* must be characterized by higher purposes, interests and aims, and have, both in name and substance, a far more neutral and comprehensive style and appellation than the *Unitarian* Association can ever have."

Anxious to know how far these opinions were really shared by others, I asked the question of Mr. Taylor; and his reply was, that in speaking of "more than one of the first formers and most active supporters" of the Association, who "now thought they had been wrong from the beginning," he had Mr. Aspland especially in view, with whom he was in frequent communication; but that he was sure the same views were held by several other of our leading men. The subject was evidently freely discussed between

the two friends; for Mr. Taylor, writing to Mr. Aspland in the spring of 1839, referred (as to something understood between them) to "our new foundation" that must be laid, and to the greater breadth that must be given it; "rallying once more round us our good old Nonconformist names, that never will join our *polemic* Institution."

These opinions and aims did not prevent Mr. Taylor from supporting meanwhile the Unitarian Association, of whose constitution he and his friend were, I believe, the main, if not the sole, authors.

Having presented my data on this matter just as they are, I must leave you to decide how far the impression I received from them was justified. At all events, in attributing to these remarkable and admirable men opinions with which I am so much in sympathy, I could not intend to pay any but a respectful and honourable tribute to their names.

It only remains for me to notice the conclusion to which I was finally brought:—that we should avoid distinguishing ourselves ecclesiastically from the General Christian Church by any name, unless expressing either our historical origin, or our refusal to limit God's grace in Christ by dogmatic conditions. (III. ii. 1, 2.)

When I say that "*we*" should avoid this, I mean *we* in our ecclesiastical capacity. In all that relates to our permanent Church-life, whether in our separate congregations or in our action as a denomination, we should look beyond our own horizon, and avoid identifying ourselves with a particular phase of doctrinal change. Nine-tenths of our congregations have lived, for something like half their history, a life to which the word Unitarian does not apply: and have their trust-deeds and constitution doctrinally open. What right have the existing occupants to introduce a theological name, and turn it into a usage on the Minutes, and in the public acts of the Society? The mere legal effect of this historical breach of trust ought to give us warning. An erroneous impression prevails, I believe, that

under the Dissenters' Chapels Act, we may do what we like; and that our open Trust-deeds will now carry us through all our difficulties. This Act however creates in one respect a peculiar danger. It destroys the old rule that all subsequent accretions of property should follow the first foundation; and expressly provides that, if doctrinal descriptions are attached to any accretion, they shall have their restrictive effect, notwithstanding the greater latitude allowed in the original Chapel Trusts. Suppose then the habit to become established of calling a chapel Unitarian, in spite of its broader basis: suppose that from time to time bequests, for its schools, for its minister, for its poor, are left in terms conformed to this current usage: then although the congregation is still at liberty for ulterior changes, it can carry into them only its chapel, and must drop the later enrichments it has received.* Morally, still

* In the *Inquirer* of October 15, a writer, signing himself "*Sigma*," denies that, under the Dissenters' Chapels Act, our old open Trusts any longer leave us the liberty of change, more than if they actually contained Unitarian restrictions. The present law, he says, "has tied up the property" to the doctrine and usage of the twenty-five most recent years; and this period being Unitarian, the property is Unitarian *for ever*. Usage having thus all the binding effect of a creed in the original trust, you may as well (he thinks), in founding a new chapel, put your doctrines into the deed at once; for, whether you do or not, you will be in the same plight after twenty-five years of Unitarian preaching.

This is an error. The twenty-five years' usage is not *binding;* it is only *permissive*. It is a valid plea against any charge of illegality in doctrine; but is so far from rendering *other doctrines unlawful*, that, if they, in their turn, can win their twenty-five years' term of peaceable occupancy, it extends a like protection to them. In the Bill, as originally drawn and presented to the Upper House, the usage-clause *had* the force ascribed to it by "*Sigma;*" a force so objectionable, as it seemed to me, that I implored the solicitors who were watching the measure to get it altered. The legal men, however, were afraid of touching a word in a Bill that had obtained the Lord Chancellor's approval. The Members of Parliament were freer to move; and the Bill received the required amendment from Lord Sandon in the Lower House. The twenty-five years' usage was made

more than legally, does a dogmatic name encumber that legitimate development which belongs to all spiritual life. It forces the processes of mental and religious growth, naturally modest and noiseless, to take place by starts and schisms; and meanwhile gives an artificial advantage, in a Church, to the inert and perishing element in it. It trains the minds of successive generations into the stereotyped forms and phraseology of a particular controversy, in spite of its altering relations to their general culture. It compels the trial of new questions by old formulas, that do not cover half their ground. Say what we will of the absolute importance of this or that truth, its relative importance must vary with the temper and dangers of the age. The centres of living interest in religious thought are ever shifting in correspondence with the general course of intellectual and spiritual movement; and a church will assuredly follow them with fresh sympathy and power, in proportion as it is unde-

conclusive evidence, not that the doctrines of the period are those "for the preaching or promotion of which the said meeting-house, &c., was founded," but that they "*may properly be taught* in such meeting-house." A note appended to the Act, as printed in the "Debates on the Dissenters' Chapels Bill," thus explains the drift of the altered clause:—

"'That such religious doctrines as have been taught,' &c., may, *inter alia*, be taught. To meet objection made particularly by Lord Sandon and Mr. Cardwell (whose amendment this is), that *otherwise the present opinion of a congregation might be imposed on the chapel in perpetuity, and that the Unitarians might be prevented from becoming orthodox.*"—p. 408.

"*Sigma*" says that we went to Parliament in order to get "strictly entailed upon our own opinions the religious patrimony handed down from quite another faith. Was it so, indeed? Shame on us, then, that we did not rather turn out of our sanctuaries into the highways and the fields? But I venture, as one of the actors at that time, to disclaim on their behalf any such design. In establishing for themselves the right to remain unprejudiced by doctrinal change, they had no wish to withhold that right from their successors.

On the other points of "*Sigma's*" letter I have nothing to remark beyond what is already said above in the text.

tained by nominal pledge to stand fast at a prior point. Is it not, in the opinion of all but themselves, a misfortune to our friends the *Baptists*, to be defined by a doctrine which, from having been the intensest focus of the Reformation, has become about the faintest interest in theology? and are not the Independents to be congratulated that, wherever their trust-deeds are open, they have nothing but natural inertia in the way of their movement? The absence of doctrinal name leaves every truth to tell its own tale, and vindicate its own place: holding to the front of Divine things, if it have intrinsic grandeur and speak profoundly to the human soul; or dropping behind, if its importance is ancillary, and its message transitory. For my own part, I can trust the doctrine of the Unity of God to speak for itself from generation to generation, without designating for it an ecclesiastical province exclusively its own.

Let then, I should say, that vast majority of our congregations, which inherits an open constitution, and has asserted its power to pass through a theological history, retain and transmit the privilege, unimpaired by the assumption of a doctrinal name.

Let that small minority of our congregations which has a special Unitarian constitution respect the older latitude of the rest; and in all common ecclesiastical action with them, forego the narrower for the broader basis.

Let fresh congregations, in laying out their foundations, consider whether it is so well to follow the new and more rigidly completed lines, as the old ones, open to the East.

Let any Central organization, designed as a means of union and joint life, take its form and spirit from the prevailing constitution of our congregations; offering a "rallying point" to their spiritual sympathies and activity, without pledging them to theological concurrence.

Not only is this compatible, but in the long run it alone is compatible, with the zealous expression of distinctive theological conviction, by each layman, by each minister,

by each spontaneous association of persons concurrent in their belief. Let them only keep their hands off the permanent principles of Church-life, and they may combine and disperse by the free play of intellectual sympathy in theological just as in political opinion. From the pulpit is to be preached unreservedly the whole religion of the Minister,—Christian piety, ethics, theology, politics and all: during his life-interest in the place he may carry with him whom he can; even lead his people, if he will, into the highways and market-places as missionaries of his special faith; provided it be done at their own charge and in their own character. Just as there is nothing to prevent one minister, if he can, from establishing, and the next from upsetting, "Peace principles," in the minds of a people, without committing their chapel to either, or handing it from sect to sect; so may questions of divinity be left to various treatment as the climate of human thought changes, without any breach of continuity, while practical sympathy lasts. That such latitude in succession is inconceivable and chimerical is quite a new doctrine. It was formerly thought narrow to deny it among contemporaries. "I think," says Dr. Doddridge, "we cannot be too careful not to give any countenance to that narrow spirit which has done so much mischief in the Christian Church. And what confusion would it breed among us, if those who were supposed to be of different sentiments, *either in the Trinitarian, Calvinistical, or other controversies*, were to be on both sides excluded from each other's pulpits!" * It marks the direction in which our sympathies are moving, that what was too narrow for the heart of Doddridge has become for us an inconceivable stretch of the horizon of charity.

I hope it is apparent by this time that in protesting against the ecclesiastical assumption of a dogmatic name, I am influenced by no depreciating estimate of doctrinal theology in general, or of Unitarian principles in particular.

* Historical account of his own Life, by Calamy, Vol. II. 417.

The question is not about the importance of this or that discriminative doctrine; but about the propriety of fixing *any* polemically-selected doctrine as the permanent essence of Church-life. Were every characteristic of my own theology, all that I most distinctly and positively hold, picked out, endowed with some adequately expressive name, and put into the same position, my protest would lose nothing of its earnestness. As for the *word* Unitarian, it is a good one, when you want to mark the particular side of theology to which it refers, and to speak of people by their theological classification. So long as the idea of a saving orthodoxy regulates the language of Christendom, and fixes curiosity more upon the creed than upon the life of men, the world will perhaps describe us by this name or by that of "Socinian." But it belongs to our ecclesiastical protest against the whole notion of orthodoxy to accept neither: to insist on deposing the differences of creed from their monstrous usurpation: to draw forth into just prominence the spiritual and moral conditions in which alone our relation to God is realized: and in the name of Christ to proclaim a church of goodness, love, and heavenly-mindedness.

Under what name, other than doctrinal, we bear this witness, seems to me of little moment. For my own part, I am content with the old set of phrases in use in Priestley's time: and had any one fixed upon us, as upon the "Quakers" and "Methodists," a merely descriptive nickname, I should not have objected to wear it. You may fill an empty name with character; but a full one presses its mark into you and makes you serve it. There are those among us by whom the want seems to be felt of some designation more entirely true than "English Presbyterian": and could we pick out of its significance what we wish to retain, and drop its false suggestion of synodical government, the resultant element would certainly be better than the whole. Of the possibility of this I have no doubt; but, as I do not believe that the right thing is ever

kept out of existence for want of the right name, I will resist the temptation held out by one or two ingenious critics, and leave the verbal problem to wait upon the real. Unity and breadth of name would be a poor mockery, unless expressing a realized unity and breadth of spirit and action. Once let this become a fact: let even a vigorous *desire* declare itself to do a common work and represent a common thought in the religious society of our country; let some self-renunciation be shown for the sake of reaching the common ground on which we all may stand; let each specialty of zeal among us be content with freedom in its own particular circle, without claiming to occupy the whole:—in short, let the moral and spiritual conditions of union exist: and they will solve their main difficulties by simply proclaiming themselves to be there; and readily create both "a rallying point" and a name. Mr. Edgar Taylor, while longing for "a focus of liberal dissent," was oppressed by a doubt "how far we could ever be properly made one denomination, considering our discordant elements in some respects, and our want of discipline." Such a doubt as that cannot be resolved by inventing happy names: a Resolution, even unanimous, to call Chaos "Cosmos," will not help creation on; but one Divine Word really moving in our hearts would set the elements in order, and make the dividing darkness fly. Let us hope all things; and yield ourselves to His spirit who is the "author not of coufusion but of peace."

Here, my dear sir, having reached the last topic of my former letter, it becomes me to bring the present one to its close. The critics to whom I speak through you will find many of their remarks untouched;—some arguments which, after honest pains, I cannot succeed in bringing into the field of our subject at all; some misconceptions which, I am sure, a second reading of the letter would remove; and, I must add, a few reproaches and personalities which, having inflicted the pain intended by them, stand henceforth chiefly in need of silence. But the

substance of every pertinent critique it has been my aim to notice. And if but a few readers are as candid and apprehensive as yourself, there is hope that any truth and good too dimly seen by me may be worked out into light by the labour of some better skill.

I remain, my dear Sir,

Very truly yours,

JAMES MARTINEAU.

London, October 14th, 1859.

REV. S. F. MACDONALD.

XI.

TRACTS FOR PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.*

It is curious to remark the different effect of excitement from danger to the State and from danger to the Church. The former calls into action, even under absolute governments, generous and uniting passions, before which the lines of party disappear, and the spirit of forbearance and self-sacrifice rises to the ascendant. The latter, even in a

*I. "Religio Laici." By Thomas Hughes, Author of "Tom Brown's School-Days."

II. "The Mote and the Beam: a Clergyman's Lessons from the Present Panic." By the Rev. F. D. Maurice, Incumbent of St. Peter's, Vere Street.

III. "The Atonement as a Fact and as a Theory." By the Rev. Francis Garden, Sub-Dean of Her Majesty's Chapels Royal.

IV. "The Signs of the Kingdom of Heaven: an Appeal to Scripture upon the Question of Miracles." By the Rev. John Llewelyn Davies, M.A., Rector of Christ Church, Marylebone.

V. On Terms of Communion:
1. "The Boundaries of the Church." By the Rev. C. K. P.
2. "The Message of the Church." By J. N. Langley, M.A.

VI. "The Sermon of the Bishop of Oxford on Revelation, and the Layman's Answer."
1. "A Dialogue on Doubt." By J. M. Ludlow.
2. "Morality and Divinity." By the Rev. F. D. Maurice, Incumbent of St. Peter's, Vere Street.

VII. "Two Lay Dialogues." By J. M. Ludlow.
1. "On Laws of Nature, and the Faith therein."
2. "On Positive Philosophy."

London, Macmillan, 1861. *National Review*, 1861.

free country, seems at once to awaken every dormant ecclesiastical egotism, to widen every difference, to intensify all dogmatism, and hoot down the catholic and charitable temper. In critical moments for the nation, Parliament knows how to suspend its inner conflicts, and take its measures with reticent dignity. In critical moments for the Church, her Councils and Convocations break into a Babel of contention, where only one thing is certain,—that new truth and gentle wisdom have no chance, but must leave the game to the wrangling of schoolmen, the chatter of popular preachers, the decorous spite of the scholar, and the arts of ecclesiastical diplomats. The recent panic occasioned by the volume of "Essays and Reviews" presents in general no exception to this rule. Every party in the Church, every "denomination" beyond it, has endeavoured to turn the excitement to account, and make sectarian "capital" out of it. The Romanist takes the phenomenon as a fall of the mask from Protestantism: the Anglican, as proving the need of tradition in aid of Scripture: the Comtist, as an instalment of Positivism: the Evangelical, as betraying the cloven foot of "Neology": the Unitarian,—affectionately embracing in their Oxford dress the daring heresies which he has frowned down in his own household,—as a homage, if not to his doctrines, at least to his method. To the "religious newspapers" the book was as great a godsend as a Garibaldi expedition or an American civil war to the *Times* in the long vacation. They have discussed it according to their nature. They are the modern receptacles of such debates as in other times found their centre in ecclesiastical assemblies. In their columns it is, that, in our days, a Nicolas of Myra must plant his fist in Arius's jaw: there, that an Athanasius must rage, and a Eusebius truckle: there, that the orthodox shout is raised to expel some obnoxious Theodoret: thence, that peaceable folks keep aloof, like Gregory Nazianzen, from "the concourse of geese and cranes." They necessarily take the measure of every theological phenomenon from their own

special and exclusive point of view; and, unless from the conflict or balance of opposite exaggerations, leave its true proportions no chance of coming out.

The "Tracts for Priests and People" form, in their whole tone and spirit, a marked exception to this disputatious partizanship. Proceeding from a well-known band of associates,—the οἱ περὶ Maurice,—they are not a manifesto in the interests of a school;—not a pious parody and coarse caricature set up as an altar-piece;—but a serious, manly, and large-hearted exposition of Christian faith, in its direct relations to human life. In religious depth and moral earnestness, in sympathetic appreciation of the doubts they would relieve, and in a certain openness to truth all round, they stand out in favourable contrast from the mass of literature on this *cause célèbre*. The writers, both clerical and lay, are free from the opposite disabilities of the men of mere thought and the men of mere action. Susceptible, like all persons of liberal culture, to the problems of the hour, they yet are not enclosed in any scientific clique or academic *officinà*, where questions are got up and intellectual formulas hammered into shape; but are immersed in the real life of the world where these things appear in the working;—where distributed scepticism ferments in the actual character of the young and thoughtful, preying upon the spirits, unnerving the will;—and where, if class is separated from class, it is not from political injustice, not from social inhumanity, but from the want of a common reverence uniting all in God. Greatly to the honour of this set of Churchmen, it may be said, that no school, born so deep in the dim recesses of philosophy, ever emerged so soon into the light of action, or took on itself so faithfully the yoke of labour: it is truly a paradoxical paternity, by which Coleridge, with his subtle intellect and flabby will, becomes the father of a "*muscular* Christianity." The double interest which his representatives thus acquire in the religious problems of the day, by mental inheritance and by moral experience, gives to their words a peculiar weight. They

are not intellectual cowards, afraid to face any real lights of knowledge, or to scrutinize the passing shades of doubt. Nor are they indifferent spectators of the mere play of thought among the thinkers; but in contact with its human results, nearer than less genial counsellors can be to the confessional of its struggles and its sorrows. In many respects, the "Tracts" speak in a way not unworthy of this advantageous position.

The characteristic theology of these writers has great resources for dealing with the wants and questionings of religious minds. Itself the product of a spiritual experience, which swept in Coleridge through all latitudes, and in Mr. Maurice has traversed no small arc, it is cognizant of dangers, and aware of safe and quiet channels, where a less searching survey fails to show them. The higher interpretation which it gives to most of the distinctive words and formulas of Church doctrine delivers them from many oppressive difficulties. The well-known explanation of the word "eternal," which lifts it out of the sphere of time, completely transforms the whole "heaven and hell" theology; wipes out the contrast between the present and the future life; and turns "salvation" into a spiritual emancipation, whether now or then, from whatever is contrary to God. We need not say how many gross pictures, at this single touch, vanish into air; how sentient pleasures and pains retire in shame before a more solemn reckoning; and how the suspicion falls to the ground at once that religion is but self-interest with a long look-out. The pravity of human nature returns within the limits of credible fact, when it is no longer "the sin of being born," but is construed into the inherent repugnance of Self to higher and rightful claims: and when, further, those higher claims themselves, as revealed to the soul within and embodied in the moral constitution of the world without, are resolved into the Personal communion with us of the Son's Divine Humanity, it becomes a matter of course to refer all our evil to ourselves, and all our good to what is beyond us. And if indeed

there be this supernatural life underlying the natural, realizing the Order of a Perfect Will in the physical world, and pleading for its realization in our free spirits,—if the phenomena of the visible universe and the march of history are but the external scenery and drama of this inner Divine Personality,—then Revelation is simply the emergence of the reality into knowledge: not a making of divine things (which, missed or seen, are always there), but a showing of them: not an exceptional *coup d'état* in the administration of the world, but an opened sample of its eternal laws. Even that the Son of God should take upon him a human individuality is but the manifesting climax of what, as abiding in our nature and originating all its good, he for ever partially does. And when his death is regarded simply as the uttermost surrender of a holy will, when its efficacy is sought, not in the penal virtue of its sufferings, but in the moral perfection of its obedience, and is found, not in the pacifying of God, but in the redeeming force of such self-sacrifice on man, the atonement itself does its best to return within the shelter of righteous law, and ceases to be a forensic insult and browbeating to the Conscience of mankind. Observe, finally, the proper meaning of the word "*Faith*," as determined by these antecedents. It is personal trust in the Divine Guide, who speaks with us in every higher claim;—a trust consciously exercised by the Christian, who discerns in the claim a living and a loving eye; unconsciously, by the righteous Pagan, who knows not the Person but reveres the Law. Salvation by Faith falls thus into coalescence with salvation by Obedience: only, that its true power first declares itself, when the impersonal Law breaks from its cloud and comes forth as the living God; when our surrender is one, not of constraint to a dead statute, but of free affection to an Almighty Guardian; when what else were Morality rises into Divinity. How different is this from that Salvation by dogma,—or, at all events, not without dogma,—which poisons the heart of almost every church, and is little else than Christendom's standing sin

against the Holy Ghost! Is it wonderful that Mr. Maurice incessantly recurs, — perhaps not always pertinently,—to this distinction, radical to all religion, and scattering an infinitude of doubts, between opinion as critical assent to a proposition, and faith as moral reliance on a higher Person?

From this theology no more wise and welcome consequence flows than the erasure of the false distinction between secular and spiritual things. It is a distinction that has no root in reality, and lies only in our blindness or our vision. The world is divine, whether we see it or not: its common duties, its humblest work, the order of its affections, the hierarchy of its relations,—in the home, in the village, in the commonwealth, in the family of nations,—are holy ordinances, the very sacraments of reality, alive with the Highest Presence: they are secular only to those from whom this truth is hid, and whom no secret awe deters from making them the field for the selfish play of humour, interest, or ambition. "There are not two moralities,"—one for nature, the other for grace: "Conversion" does not alter, but only reveal, a man's spiritual obligations and position: it puts him into no divine kingdom, where he was not already: he stands in the same universe in which he stood before: only the scales have fallen from his eyes. That the new experience thus opened is wonderful, nay even a rebirth of the spirit, may be asserted with the Evangelical: yet that God's grace is contingent on human consciousness and recognition may be denied with the Catholic. In this view, the world and the Church, labour and prayer, morals and religion, the life of nature and the life in God, merge into each other and are objectively one; and stand apart only through the subjective illusion of our darkness or our sin. This consecration of the common ground and work of our humanity relieves many a heart that vainly demands of itself the anguish and raptures of conviction, yet beats with a living pulse of righteousness, and flushes the cheek with joy in what is noble, pure, and

true. In all these respects, the distinctive theology of our new "Tractarians" has hold of such deep truths, and stands clear of so many protests which strike home elsewhere, as to address itself with great advantage to the troubled faith of honest and serious minds. There are two forms of religious distress or dearth to which, especially, it brings infinite deliverance. First, where, as in Scotland, the Genevan "plan of salvation,"—with its corresponding "plan of damnation,—has at last, by long hammering, broken through the logical crust, and pierced the heart, of humanity; an insurgent agony has arisen,—a fierce struggle between defiant denial and believing despair,—on which the gospel of this school opens as a tranquillizing revelation, permitting hope and charity without forfeiture of faith and holiness. And, secondly, where a Deistical philosophy or a mere Historical theology had virtually set God away from the "here" and "now," and, under prolonged drought and famine of divine things, even delivered the prophet's rod to Carlyle's hand, to bring water from the rock and show the manna on the ground,—an unspeakable refreshment was brought by a theology which, also lifting the thick veil, showed not only a divine mystery and beauty, but the Living God himself, and re-baptized the present, not simply in wonder and reverence, but in the communion of trust and affection. The depth to which Mr. Maurice's faith is penetrated with this truth,—of the immediateness and perpetuity of the Divine self-witness,—betrays itself in a verbal peculiarity pervading his writings. In speaking of the acts and dealings of God, he is fond of substituting the continuous or progressive tense (is doing, was doing, will be doing) for the aorist (does, did, will do) in all the times; as if to preclude the idea of cessation, and to suspend us ever in the midst of the divine activities. Thus it is said, "God is manifesting himself," "is meeting" men, "is revealing to them what their character is" (No. II. p. 8). The usage seems to be infectious, and, in other hands than Mr. Maurice's, spreads into new connexions, not without a

disagreeable effect on the style of the writers. "Christ," says Mr. Hughes, of the miracles, "seems to me to *have been asserting* the freedom of that law of God by suspending these natural laws": and, of the first chapter of Genesis,—"What impressed me most in it then was, the order and harmony of the whole, and the way in which every stage *is leading up* through man to God" (No. I. pp. 27, 29). The more we respect the origin of this habit of speech, the more should we regret its degenerating into even the appearance of affectation.

The writers of this school, guided by natural genius and the special work they have to do, have, with all their individual varieties, fallen into a certain *method* of their own. They are men of religious insight, of moral nobleness, of deep personal convictions: they have a message to deliver, and they deliver it; leaving it for the most part to bear its own testimony. It is to them *immediate* truth, which wants no mediation of theirs; let it only be laid out side by side with the alternative half-truths, or sham-truths, and it will make itself good, by simply being what *they* are not. Its persuasiveness consists in its answer to the inner need which it meets, and its faithful interpretation of the experience on which it falls. Beyond, therefore, its positive announcement, there is little further support given to it than a comparative portraiture, often contemptuous enough, of doctrines which would dispute its place. What vast power there may be in this mere exhibition of some gem of truth suspended in a gallery of counterfeits, is evident from the effect of Mr. Carlyle's writings, whose procedure is so far essentially the same. Such a method is quite adequate to the functions we have assigned to the Maurice theology. To the heart parched by the arid miseries of Calvinism, the simple offer of this theology is as the cup of cold water to the lips of fever. And so, when pure and susceptible natures have been permitted to grow up, stiff and stunted, in the frosts of Deistical exile, the mere approach of a mind charged with the living warmth of the Eternal Light,—the

very gleam of its thoughts and tone of its words,—will suffice to release and melt them into redemption. But there are limits to the force of simple enunciation, even of the highest truths. And when our authors, in their recoil from the formal dialectic of divinity, propose, as a kind of theory of method, to fall back in general on the delivery of a message and the proclamation of a creed, they overstrain the resources of mere statement, and underrate the complex exigencies of modern thought. The principle is thus laid down by Mr. Llewelyn Davies:

"If there is any truth in the Scriptures, His blessing will rest upon those who bring forward His gospel in advance of all arguments or traditions, even if they can do nothing but seriously repeat it, and trust to its being its own evidence. 'If I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?' 'We are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.' 'By manifestation of the truth, commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.'" (No. IV. p. 33.)

Though this is justly enough advanced as a reason for not staking the gospel-appeal on any management of the miracle-argument, it is evident from the following illustration that Mr. Davies gives the principle a wider application:

"Professor Stanley, in his interesting account of the Nicæan Council, relates two stories, which, whether they are true, or whether they express a conviction in the mind of the Church, are almost equally instructive. Many popular discussions of doctrine took place, he says, previously to the formal opening of the Council. In one of these, after divines had been endlessly disputing, a layman stepped forward, and abruptly said, 'Christ and the apostles left us, not a system of logic, nor a vain deceit, but a naked truth, to be guarded by faith and good works.' On another occasion, a heathen philosopher had been contending with learned Christians, and had always slipped, *velut anguis lubricus*, out of the grasp of their arguments. An aged confessor hereupon stepped forth to meet him. 'In the name of Jesus Christ,' he said, 'hear me, philosopher. There is one God, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and

invisible; Who made all things by the power of His Word, and by the holiness of His Holy Spirit. This Word, by which name *we* call the Son of God, took compassion on men for their wandering astray, and for their savage condition, and chose to be born of a woman, and to converse with men, and to die for them; and he shall come again to judge every one for the things done in this life. These things we believe without curious inquiry.' After a few more direct words like these, the philosopher yielded. 'Hear,' he said, 'my learned friends. So long as it was a matter of words, I opposed words to words; and whatever was spoken, I overthrew by my skill in speaking; but when, in the place of words, power came out of the speaker's lips, words could no longer resist power, man could no longer resist. If any of you felt as I have felt, let him believe in Christ, and let him follow this old man in whom God has spoken.' (*Eastern Church*, p. 132.)

"It would be foolish, no doubt, to imagine that unbelievers may be captured by a *coup de main*, through the mere reiteration of any such simple statements. But it is not foolish to bring out the unspeakable importance of giving due prominence to the simplest affirmation of what God is, and what He has done for men." (No. IV. p. 33.)

Notwithstanding the qualifying clause by which the author guards his rule, we think the reliance of these *Tracts* on the *coup-de-main* method quite excessive, and especially unsuited to the occasion which has called them forth. They professedly deal with the crisis evoked by the "Essays and Reviews," and cannot but intend to throw some light upon the questions which that volume raises. Those questions are all of them seated pretty deep in the philosophy of religion, and the researches of biblical and historical criticism. The relation between the inner course of Hebrew history and the outer lines of Heathendom; the real meaning, true or false, of the Mosaic account of the Creation; the discord or harmony of science and faith; the existence and purport of Messianic predictions; the credibility and function of the Scripture miracles; the age and authorship of the several New Testament books; their consistency or discrepancy in

narrative and doctrine; the right procedure for their true interpreter; the nature and limits of their authority:—these are topics on which it is vain to pronounce by simple affirmation; which cannot be referred to the inner response of conscience; which remain undetermined in the face of the deepest sense of the living God; and on which the truth can be approached only by the patient skill of the critic, and the combinations of a thorough philosophy. Yet in the *Tracts* before us, only one of these questions,—viz., that raised by Mr. Baden Powell, as to the relation between Natural and Supernatural Order,—is treated with any thing like a reasonable discussion,—first, in its relation to the miracles, by Mr. Davies, and then, in relation to kosmical law as grounded in Will, by Mr. Ludlow. Both these writers show a respectful appreciation of their subject, and contribute thoughtful and suggestive essays. But from none of their associates will "Priests and People," puzzled by the "Essays and Reviews," gain the slightest help, beyond the comfort of knowing what Mr. Hughes believes, and what "lessons", Mr. Maurice draws from the seven treatises, and the panic, and the quarterly Reviews, and the Bishop of Oxford and his Lay Critic, and the remaining elements of the crisis. Personal confessions of faith, whatever their autobiographical interest, and homiletic comments, however true their spirit, on what we want to be told and what we do not want, contribute nothing to the solution of any pending difficulty. The influence which they may exert,—that of sympathy and spiritual response,—can operate only in the way of diversion from the problems of fact and thought, whence the whole ferment comes. We are perpetually referred to the "Living Witness and Interpreter" of Divine things. That "Living Witness" we reverently own. But, for all that, the chronology and incidents of Matthew's and Luke's introductions remain at variance; Galatians and Acts stand at issue as before; the Last Supper cannot both have been and not have been the Passover; and the prophecies of the Second Coming passed

their date and outlived their meaning without fulfilment. In such matters there is no diviner interpreter than the pure and single eye of a truthful spirit, that can see things as they are, and has no optical tricks for either severing the harmonious or blending the contradictory. Mr. Maurice, addressing his brother clergymen, says:

"Why waste the short time in which you are able to work in speculation? Why argue and debate, when you might proclaim good news to your fellow-creatures? You talk of the value of testimony and antiquity in establishing certain propositions. Cannot you trust God to testify of them as He did of old? You say the evidence of miracle and prophecy is conclusive. Let it be conclusive. Then speak out the conclusion. Set forth the miracles as they are set forth in the Gospel, as witnesses of Christ's kingdom over men. Study the prophets, and learn what words they spoke to the people in their day respecting the living God and His government over men. See whether their words are not mightier than all the evidences that have been deduced from them." (No II. p. 20.)

Excellent advice for an undoubting clergy among an undoubting,—though it may be a heedless,—people!—only, in that case, quite superfluous, since such a clergy are not given to "speculate," or at all slow to "proclaim." But, as a remedy for shaken or undetermined belief, as an escape from the perception of difficulties and the force of discovery, the course recommended is morally irrelevant;—ineffectual, if applied to a questioning people; if followed by a questioning clergy, dishonest. Were Mr. Maurice consulted by persons in doubt about the "Resurrection of the body,"—still more, had it lost (as is understood to be the case with many German divines) its decisive hold upon his own faith,—we are sure he would not be content to go on "proclaiming;" he would not set aside "antiquity" and its witnesses, in expectation that "God would testify;" he would have to "argue," probably even to "speculate;" and would find that a faith, once disturbed by legitimate intellectual processes, can be reinstated only by resort to

them again. It has been said, in benevolent apology for Mr. Spurgeon's pulpit style, "True, it has its taint of vulgarity: but vulgar people exist, and must have their religion." It seems to be forgotten at the other end that men of letters and science exist, that hosts of academic and professional youth exist, and, being human, must have their religion. The culture of the age preoccupies their minds with habits of thought variously traversing the 'message" of the Church, and with many distinct objections to parts of the Bible and the creed. Is no notice to be taken of this state of mind? Do you expect that, on hearing the message, it will die out of itself? Will you treat it as a delirium,—as a mere fretful illusion,—to be coaxed into cure by changing the subject and speaking home to another part of the nature? Or is all sympathy to be withheld from the mental strife of the intellectual classes? and are they to limp on as they can in the rear of a faith, that will not turn its face to answer them a word?

We should better understand the attitude of our "Tractarians" towards questions of critical and scientific theology, if their own faith were unconcerned in the issue of such inquiries. If they were prepared to say outright, "The Living Witness will in any case suffice for us: we want no outward testimony from other times to tell us what we know: be the Bible what it may, we love it simply because it communes with us in spirit and draws from us a deep response: but the revelation of God is eternal and depends on no book;" then certainly, critical problems would be indifferent to them; they might look past them, as not in the line of their religion; and very properly use such language as the following from the *Religio Laici:*

"Men may satisfy themselves,—perhaps, if I have time to give to the study, they may satisfy me,—that the Pentateuch was the work of twenty men; that Baruch wrote a part of Isaiah; that David did not write the Psalms, or the Evangelists the Gospels; that there are interpolations here and there in the originals; that there are numerous and serious errors in our

translation. What is all this to me? What do I care who wrote them, what is the date of them, what this or that passage ought to be? They have told me what I wanted to know. Burn every copy in the world to-morrow, you don't and can't take that knowledge from me, or any man. I find them *all* good for me; so, as long as a copy is left, and I can get it, I mean to go on reading them all, and believing them all to be inspired." (No. 1. p. 25.)

If Mr. Hughes can be so independent of the date and authorship of historical books like the Gospels, he cannot, one would suppose, be particular about the trustworthiness of their narrative parts: for this surely depends a little upon the age and person of the historian. However much the portraiture and words of Christ may carry their own credentials, the record of what happened to him,—the birth and infancy, the death and resurrection,—owes all its value to the testimony on which it rests: and loses its historical character if, instead of being contemporary and first-hand, it is the work of later anonymous compilers. Yet, with strange inconsistency, the author who is so free and easy with the witnesses, and cares not to ask who they are, rests his whole faith upon the thing attested—viz., that the Son of God became incarnate, being "conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary." He distinctly says, "The Incarnation is for me the support of all personal holiness, and the key to human history" (p. 19). Is it nothing to him, then, from what hand he receives this key? Does he hold it as a mere working *hypothesis*, which, once started in the dark, recommends itself sufficiently by fitting the phenomena? Or, resting on it as a Divine *fact*, known historically or else not known at all, can he be indifferent to its solidity? Nor, considering the extent of the prophetical element in Scripture, can we understand how the "date" of books can be a small matter to an author who evidently identifies prophecy with prediction. How but by "date" do we know real fore-announcement from *vaticinia post eventum?* The truth is, this school has never

succeeded in settling accounts between the Eternal Divine facts spiritually revealed by the ever-living Witness, and the historical phenomena of the past, which, however connected with religion, are cognizable only through human testimony. In the joy of having found the former, even Mr. Maurice forgets the different tenure of the latter, involves them in the same feeling and treatment, as if they, too, were entities, apprehensible to-day, independently of yesterday, and free from the contingencies of probable evidence. He wraps up in the same folds of ontological language the purely spiritual and the simply historical elements of the creed: with the tacit feeling and assumption that the permanent carries the transitory not only into being, but into knowledge. The Personal life of God in the world, of which his sense is so deep, seems to guarantee for him the particular Divine acts and manifestations enumerated in the Scriptures or the formularies of the Church: and his one standing appeal to us is,—"Believe in Him who is signified, and you will believe the signs." Yet it is plain that no prior apprehension of God would enable us to divine, before they came, the forms in which his agency would express itself; or, after they have come and been reported, to separate the threads of reality from those of fiction in a narrative of mixed tissue. For knowledge of the Divine events, taken one by one, we are not less dependent on human attestation than for the biography of an Emperor or an Apostle: and it is vain to treat them as if they were deducibles from the primary spiritual truth, and sure to stand or fall with it. Frequent as this assumption is in the Maurician writings, there are times when the reasoning is just inverted; and we are told that, did we not know the facts enumerated in the Apostles' Creed, we should have no escape from atheism or pantheism. If so, the premisses of all religion are historical, not spiritual: the most tremendous consequences are staked upon the security of the history: and, in place of indifference or disparagement towards a testing criticism, a consistent

believer will rather hang upon its processes with vigilance at once anxious and hopeful. Our authors play fast and loose with these opposite lines of thought: at one time saying, "Let the critics have their way; God lives and will witness to Himself;" at another, "Take away from us the story of the miraculous conception, and we are stripped of our belief in a Living God."

It has always been the favourite logic of divines,—"Take your choice: either with us, or without God:" though nine-tenths of the thoughtful portion of mankind have variously ranged themselves between the atheist and the orthodox, and made the interval habitable at innumerable points. Our new Tractarians, we regret to observe, are not ashamed of again plying the worn-out dilemma, and using the hobgoblin of Positivism, to drive people to the asylum of the Nicene Creed. "Which you please," they say to us, "either dead laws, or the Incarnation." Mr. Hughes distinctly asserts,—"With our Lord must go all belief in a personal God" (p. 14); and what he means by "our Lord," is evident at once from the connexion, and from the following paragraph:

"This loyalty I could never have rendered, no man can ever render, I believe, except to a Son of man. He must be perfect man as well as perfect God to satisfy us—must have dwelt in a body like ours, have felt our sorrows, pains, temptations, weaknesses. He was incarnate by the Spirit of God of the Virgin. In this way I can see how he was indeed perfect God and perfect Man. I can conceive of no other in which he could have been so. The Incarnation is for me the support of all personal holiness, and the key to human history" (p. 19).

This astounding claim for the Incarnation,—that it alone discloses the personality of God,—has often been advanced by writers like Dr. Newman (see his *University Sermons*), who make all determinate religion a matter of external authority: but comes strangely enough from those who insist on the eternal self-witness of God. We protest against its levity and rashness. If it be true, our escape

from "dead laws" is indeed precarious. For there is no guarantee for the alternative doctrine except the opening chapters of Matthew and Luke; whose narratives contain in themselves, and play off against each other, every conceivable difficulty that can bring suspicion on an historical relation: they contradict each other's chronology, genealogy, geography, and whole substance as well as order of both natural and supernatural events: they stand at variance with authentic secular history: they are without support from the other evangelists, even him who had taken Mary to his home; and reappear in no subsequent allusion throughout the New Testament writings, not excepting the very gospels in which they are found. Narratives of this kind, strongly impressed with a legendary character, in which nameable angels appear upon the scene, and men and women speak off-hand in original hymns, and public as well as private miracles surround the person of the future Saviour with an insulating glory, entail, if received, insuperable difficulties on the subsequent history, or, if critically examined, suffer greatly by comparison with it. Not produced till more than half a century from the incidents they report, not pretending to come from contemporary witnesses, though full of detail and speeches which even first-hand testimony could scarcely authenticate, they cannot for a moment be put upon the same footing with the accounts of the ministry of Christ. Yet this is the chosen ground on which to rest the foundation of all religion! The assurance of a personal God is to stand or fall with the massacre of the Innocents and the census of Quirinus!

But further, the plainest facts refute this claim for the Incarnation. Had the Jewish people, prior to the Advent, no knowledge of a personal God? Does the human conscience bear no witness to his Moral Government? and have the wise Heathens only dreamt, whom the shadow of guilt or the authority of goodness has startled into this belief? And surely the Apostle Paul was neither pantheist nor atheist: yet there is not the slightest reason to attribute

to him the doctrine expressed in the words, "conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary." On this point, indeed, there is more than the negative evidence of silence. Both of the human lineage of Christ, and of the Spirit's relation to him, the Apostle speaks in terms which exclude the idea of miraculous conception: "The Son of God," he says (Rom. i. 3, 4), "*sprung from the seed of David according to the flesh*" (requiring Joseph as connecting link), and "declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of Holiness from the resurrection of the dead." Here are both the human sonship left to the course of natural descent, and the divine sonship through the Spirit referred not to the birth, but to the resurrection. In this we have perhaps the earliest conception of the union between the divine and the human in the person of Christ. By all who received him, he was owned under the Messianic title of "Son of God"; and this eminence was referred by all to the higher principle within him known as the "Holy Spirit." But as to the specific time and mode in which this higher principle claimed him, and the phenomena which most characteristically manifested it, a succession of different conceptions are found within the limits of the New Testament. First, and naturally with those on whose horizon it burst with all its glory, the Resurrection was the date and inauguration of his Sonship, the transcendent expression of the living and life-giving Spirit within him, by which he became the Head of an immortal, as Adam of the mortal, humanity. In this view, nothing prior to the Resurrection need have more than a human character and a moral significance. We have here the sense in which the greater and indisputable epistles of St. Paul were written: later some new elements must have entered his doctrine, if the letters to the Philippians, Ephesians, and Colossians are really his. The position of the personal companions of Jesus was different. Looking back from their final eminence on that ministry of his, which they had been so slow of heart to interpret at the time, they

could not but remember how many signs it gave forth of the same Spirit of holy power which at last broke the bonds of death; and they would take delight in recalling the divine gleams that escaped from beneath the folds of his humility, and betrayed him as already marked out for the functions awaiting him. Hence by them the inaugural point was fetched back to a prior date; and the Spirit was held to have rested on him and claimed him as the "Son of God" already at the Baptism. But are, then, the previous thirty years to be left on the village level, and awaken no surmise and make no sign? Some there were who said that his childhood was not without its signal marks of grace; who doubted whether his nature was like that of other men; and thought he might have been the "Son of God" from the first and in a more literal sense than had hitherto been supposed. This idea of a physical Sonship, dispensing with one human parent, and involving an exceptional nature, constitutes a third stage of doctrine; of which there is no vestige in the New Testament except in the introductions to Matthew and Luke. Thus far we are still without any hint of a *pre-existent* Sonship; the interpretations severally select the Resurrection, the Baptism, the Birth; but they remain within the limits of this life; even the last, explaining, as it does, by what *genesis* Jesus *becomes* the "Son of God," shuts the door of the past against that character. The final escape of the title from historical date into transcendental preëxistence was effected when the doctrine of the Logos had come into contact with the recorded life of Christ, and applied its solvent and transmuting power upon his words and deeds and person. His continued existence in heaven demanded new forms of expression to mark his Sonship there. So long as he was on earth, the visible Agent and subject of divine acts, it was enough to refer to the "Holy Spirit" as constituting him "Son of God": the more so as he had it "without measure," and it centred all in him, and to others "it had not come, because he was not yet glorified." The "Holy

Spirit," however, always means the *phenomenal* Divine power, as it breaks into immediate consciousness or expression; and ceases to give an appropriate account of one who has been lifted from the world of manifestation to the world of eternal realities. Besides, it was the disciples left behind who were now the organs of the Holy Spirit: from his glorified person it was so far released and sent down upon them, that it was now no longer the distinction of his individuality, but common to both spheres,—its potential source above, its actual work below. In this generalization and diffusion of the "Spirit," a need arose of some other conception to mark, with strict limitation to himself, the higher principle which still and for ever constituted his Sonship. The conception of the Logos supplied the want: the expressible nature of God, that whereby he thinks and speaks himself into other minds, and especially passes into communion with humanity, might well be discerned as the Divine side of the exalted Christ by those to whom he had made life holy. In this form, his Sonship escaped into supramundane time,—became a continuous and undated fact,—and only dipped down through the shadows of Incarnation, to be the link between humanity and God. The Johannine "Word made flesh," however, involves no miraculous conception, or birth from a Virgin. It belongs to a totally different order of ideas. Human parentage does not stand in its way. The Logos, the source of *all* life, can pass into possession of this individual life by its own ways of silent order. The whole drift of the fourth gospel is to blend all spiritual individuals in one, to recognize their sameness of nature with Christ, and extend common predicates to all. Its doctrine turns upon the contrast, not of human and divine, but of diabolical and divine; the human being the neutral theatre for both. The result, on the other hand, of the Incarnation in Luke is the birth of an exceptional being contrasted in the composition of his personality with the race to which he comes. *They* can never be sons of God in the sense in which *he* is: yet

this, which Luke's Incarnation excludes, is the sole end contemplated in John's.

Thus, within the Christian Scriptures themselves, there are no fewer than four different modes of conceiving the union of divine and human elements in Christ. Of these, two involve no Incarnation, and a third no superhuman birth.[1] On the remaining one, incomparably the most questionable, Mr. Hughes rashly seizes, and makes it the sole foundation for that faith in a personal God which in fact equally belongs to all the rest.

Further, we must confess our inability to perceive the logical connexion between the assumed fact and the deduced truth. What is meant, we presume, is, that in the figure of Jesus Christ, historical and human, yet sprung from the Holy Spirit, God *visibly became a Person.* True; but this is so far from implying an Eternal Personality, that it rather suggests the idea of a transitory phase of existence, into which and out of which an impersonal Infinite might pass. And accordingly, the notion of Incarnation has always been distinctive, not of monotheistic faiths, which attribute intense character and will to the object of worship, but of pantheistic religions, which cannot for ever rest in their fundamental negation of personality, but are obliged to let their Divine Essence come up now and then, and culminate in individuality and self-consciousness. Nor is any thing more certain in the history of early Christianity than that the Athanasian doctrine was the final result of the influx of *Gentile* modes of thought, and was resisted at every stage by the rigid Theism of the Judaic Christians, till the last remnant of the original Messianic believers was lost. We are far from affirming that the infusion of new elements from the Hellenic world was, on the whole, a loss rather than a gain of truth. But, certainly, its secure hold of the faith in a personal God the Christian Church owes to its Jewish descent, and possesses, not in consequence, but in spite of, its doctrine of Incarnation.

And now, having set aside what we deem a mistaken

claim for this doctrine, we are free to acknowledge and define a juster one. Belief in it could hardly be so persistent and passionate, could hardly breathe so continuously through the poetry, the art, the devotion of Christendom, had it not roots deeper than the accidental soil of tradition. Doubtless, it embodies a truth, though Mr. Hughes has named the wrong one; a truth more purely distinctive of Christianity than his. Of Heathen religion, the motto, we may say, was God in Nature; of Christian, it is God in Man; of Jewish, God *over* both. The Scriptures every where,—Old and New,—place the universal centre of gravity, round which the Providential scheme revolves, not in the Cosmos, but in Humanity: only, Man who in the Hebrew religion is the fabricated creature,—the disposable servant,—of an Almighty Maker, becomes, in the Christian, the filial partaker of the Divine nature, and drawn, through the sympathies of a common righteousness, into communion with God, not of outward converse only, but of inward life. The new revelation of Him who is "Spirit" presents Him, not separate at a sovereign interval from a long hierarchy of distinct species of intelligence below, but as the essence of holy life in all minds, the light to which they secretly aspire, the spring of love by which they break from self to reach it. This truth, this sense of reconciled approach,—of discovered affinity,—of blended life,—between Man and God, is what gives its real interest to the doctrine of Incarnation. The ecclesiastical battle respecting it raged apparently around the person of Christ: but he stood for our humanity at large; and the claim made for him, that he was the meeting-point of two natures,—that his personality was incompletely thought, unless identified in its ground with God's essence, while living all the life of an historical individual,—was in reality preferred on our behalf. In him the links were found for connecting two extremes, not ready else to detect the joy of their immediate relation. Held within the Divine nature, on the one hand, and never, as Arius affirmed,

detached into creaturely existence, he was in absolute union with the Father: having, on the other, the type and experience of Human nature, he was joined to us by the hand of brotherhood: and the upward and downward sympathy together bound heaven and earth by a chain of affinity unfelt before. That which prevented this double relation from being limited to the individuality of Christ,—that which associated our humanity at large with it, and made us also of twofold nature,—was the "Holy Spirit," whereby the Divineness broke away, as it were, from exclusive connexion with the person of the Saviour, and spread as a flame of new and holy life through the souls of men. The fresh fields of consciousness, the large horizon of affection, that opened before minds caught in this heavenly contagion, were equivalent to the gain of a higher nature,—a rebirth into another world; though, in truth, there was no objective change in the constitution of God's universe, but simply a waking up to wonders that were always there. It is a poor self-knowledge that stops with the knowledge of self: and this narrow bound was now passed, and the discovery made how much we must affirm to be human without denying it to be divine; how the shadow of our personal sins will not stay here upon the ground, but while clinging to our feet will overshoot the brink into the infinite air; how the light of our secret conscience is but refracted from a flood of Righteousness beyond. This truth is the final fruit of the doctrine of Incarnation; short of which it yields nothing but a crude and barren wonder; but ripening which, its work is done and its season near its close. For spiritual truth, once reached, has its own living witness; and having found its eternal strength, turns round and gives an interpreting support to the very history or phenomena which have served as its germ. The Incarnation is true, not of Christ exclusively, but of Man universally, and God everlastingly. He bends into the human, to dwell there: and humanity is the susceptible organ of the divine. And the spiritual light in us which forms our higher life is

"of one substance" (ὁμοούσιον) with his own Righteousness, —its manifestation, with unaltered essence and authority, on the theatre of our nature. All minds are of one species,—or rather concur in transcending the limits of species; all, as Plato said, feed upon the same aliment, the true, the right, the beautiful, the good; and that aliment itself is the very "bread of heaven," the essential life of spirit everywhere, in its Source and in its distribution. And however our abstract names may parcel or disguise it, and make it seem like a thing or thought of ours, it is God's eternal imparting of Himself to those who may grow into his likeness. Of this grand and universal truth Christ became the revealer, not by being an exceptional personage (who could be a rule for nothing), but by being a signal instance of it so intense and impressive as to set fire to every veil that would longer hide it. He was not unnaturally taken for the objective cause of that indwelling of the Divine in the human which he revealed, and by revealing indefinitely deepened and increased. And it was in the interests of this supposition,—in order to qualify his personality for so changing the constitution of the moral world,—that the theory of the double nature, as special to him, was wrought out. Take away its physical elements, remove its speciality, affirm it of humanity in general, and of him as its revealing representative; and the same truth assumes its permanent form, rescued from questionable history and arbitrary dogma, and secured by the living testimony of God's Spirit in the heart of man.

What we find, then, in reading the *Tracts for Priests and People* is this. The authors have hold of very momentous truths; appreciate them justly in their application; feel them deeply in their true ground; but, in stating or deducing them, try to get them out of ecclesiastical premisses so utterly precarious in themselves and so illogically prefixed, as to endanger and perplex the lessons they wish to teach. They read into the Creed many a thought far richer and truer than its words contain: and for their private peace

and guidance this is well; quickening old and venerable forms; and permitting the fresh flow of veracious faith within the consecrated channel. But when, for the conviction of others, the thought has to be taken out again, it becomes evident that it is not there; that its presence has been simulated by a subjective illusion; and that when it is summoned to come forth, it is the ventriloquist himself who both gives it the call, and answers to its name. The most astonishing instance of this phenomenon is, perhaps, in the attempt to extract the Maurician doctrine of Atonement, which attributes efficacy to the holy obedience, not to the incurred sufferings of Christ, and expends that efficacy entirely upon the human side, from the 2nd Church Article, which says not a word of either the obedience of Christ or the remedied alienation of man, but declares that the Son "truly *suffered, was crucified, dead and buried,* to reconcile *his Father to us,* and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for all actual sins of men." This is not an ambiguous statement: and it affirms precisely the propositions which, in defining their doctrine, our authors are most careful to disclaim. When, again, the 31st Article says that "the offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiating, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual: and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone:" when, further, it draws the inference that "the Sacrifices of Masses" are "blasphemous fables;"—it is plain that the offering of Christ is assumed to do at a stroke *the very same thing* to which the Mass pretended day by day,—*i.e.*, propitiate an alienated God,—by presenting a substitute for human obedience, or conversely, a "*satisfaction* for" human sin. Can any thing be more hopeless than the attempt to expel from this phraseology the idea of vicarious righteousness, and Divine claims bought off? Is not that idea the very pith of all "orthodox" theology? Is not the whole worship of the Western Church an attempt of the disciple to screen himself behind an acceptable Name, and

put forward, as his only plea and protection, an obedience that has been rendered for him? Yet Mr. Garden, who, like Mr. Maurice and Mr. Davies, is in moral revolt against this rude and barbarous idea, discovers that its phraseology is "expressive of a great truth:"

"Christ's sacrifice of Himself was indeed a *satisfaction* to Divine justice, and that in a far higher sense than is furnished by any mere notions of paying a debt, or enduring a penalty. The Righteousness of God has an entire satisfaction in the work of Christ Jesus. The Supreme Reason, the Perfect Mind of the Father, sees there that on which He can pour a full tide of complacency and approval. There were barriers which the Divine justice no doubt placed between God and sinful man; for perfect justice can never be on terms with sin; can never call things other than what they are; can adopt no legal fiction in order to treat the sinner as if he were not a sinner. Those barriers are broken down by Christ's sacrifice. Man is thereby brought to God. God's justice sees Man presented to Him, such as He designed Man to be, and is satisfied. The sin of the world is taken away, and all who will avail themselves of it, can occupy a position in which Man is righteous, and may serve God in holiness and righteousness, without fear." (No. II. p. 21.)

The word "satisfaction" may undoubtedly be used simply for "approval" and "complacency," or for the object of such feeling: and if nothing more were said than that the offering of Christ was a satisfaction to God, the praise might mean only that God approved the offering. But "satisfaction *for*" an offence is an approval complicated by reference to an antecedent relation: it is a complacency compensating and discharging a prior displeasure: and if the displeasure rested upon one person, while the complacency is directed on another, the "offering" is vicarious. On this point the Article leaves no doubt: the sins are Men's; the offering is Christ's: the consequent transition from displeasure to complacency is God's. Yet this is the text from which Mr. Garden can

dislodge all doctrine of substitution, and extract a "great truth" completely at variance with it!

We must accept it, however, as a law of theological advance, however humbling to our ideal of Christian simplicity, that the authoritative text of the past will long be stretched and strained with the expanding pressure of new thought, before it sets the prisoner free to build around it the organism of its future life. If our Tractarians can convince "priests and people" that the Church does not encourage the idea of Christ's doing our Divine relations for us, or redeemning us otherwise than by assimilation to his self-sacrifice, they will abuse the license of interpretation to good effect, and deliver the religion they teach from a reproach else fatal to it. They have repeatedly stated with irresistible force, the moral objections to the theory of "Satisfaction": and the only question is, whether in the residuary doctrine which they retain, innocent as it is of affront to the conscience, there is a real truth for thought and heart to grasp, or only a semblance to engage and dignify phraseology that cannot be dismissed. That doctrine, if we rightly understand our authors' not very precise expositions of it, is briefly summed up in the following propositions.

Sacrifice, in its essential idea, is simply the offering of a *gift*, as an expression of homage: the material object presented being but the symbol of that *self-surrender* to a holy will, which alone has reality with God. In Christ, symbol and reality coalesce: in his hand is no gift save *Himself*,—himself always, utterly, to the last extremity, given up to the all-righteous Will. In this,—his perfect and unreserved obedience,—lies the whole essence of his sacrifice. The element of mere suffering,—the humiliation of the cross,—has no separate significance, apart from the whole spiritual life of which it is the climax. It simply measures the intensity of the self-dedication, or rather, shows that its measure could not be found. The offering, as proceeding from Christ, *was a perfect obedience.*

That such an offering, as received by a Holy God, should find acceptance, needs no explanation. But how is it "a propitiation for the sins of the whole world?" To this question we find the following answer: that which Christ presented spotless before his Father was *human nature*,—for he was human: human nature, therefore, now that its ideal was realized, became well-pleasing in the sight of God: and we who are samples of it are included in this complacency. So far, there would seem to be ascribed to the Christian sacrifice an effect other than on us, viz., a conciliated sentiment, on the part of God, towards humanity as a Kind.

Yet on this Divine side of the Reconciliation we do not find our authors relying for any benefit to us men, so long as we, on our part, are unaffected by the persuasive efficacy of Christ's offering. Not till love and faith draw us into a like spirit of self-sacrifice are we partakers in its blessing. Redemption there is none from penalty while guilt remains; nor may we call any one our Saviour, except in so far as he has delivered us from the sinful affections that carry their eternal penalties within them. So, in its human aspect, the Atonement consists, not in any substitution of Christ's obedience, but in assimilation to it.

That this statement is not incorrect will perhaps be sufficiently apparent from the following extract:

"At last comes one in whom the matter of the oblation and the form are united; Whose gift is the inward essential sacrifice; Who said, Lo, I come to do Thy Will. And He does it perfectly. The gift of His own Will and of His own Being to the Will of his Father is entire and flawless. There is no point at which the offerer pauses. The self-surrender stays not till the very life has been offered. The obedience is carried on until it becomes an obedience unto death. Short of that point, the sacrifice would not have been complete; there would have been something kept back. But all is complete; nothing is kept back; all faith in, and all love to the eternal Father, all sympathy with the brethren, receive their full expression in the sacrifice which began with the utterance, *Lo, I*

come; and was consummated when Jesus bowed His head and gave up the ghost. In gazing on that, we are gazing on the Only Gift ever offered to God, which, for its own sake, God could regard with complacency; in which for its own sake, God could take delight. And we may see how the union of Christ with His brethren renders this gift propitiatory in its effects upon them. For it is human nature which He has offered up in spotless sacrifice to the Father; the whole race is represented in Him. He is the Head and the Root of all mankind. Therefore, mankind now stands accepted before God, and every sharer in the kind may at once plead and occupy the righteous position which has been won for it by the accepted sacrifice of its great Representative." (No. II. p. 17.)

Now there are two points which we cannot understand in this theory: viz. (1) the place it assigns to the *death* of Christ; (2) the extension to men in general of God's complacency in him personally.

(1) The cross, it is admitted, is but the consummation of a perfect self-devotion, extending no less through a whole previous life, but then at last meeting its supreme test. It is not the *sentient endurance*, but the *moral rightness*, of that death, which constitutes its essence and whole power. What, then, made it right, and set it in the pathway of a holy obedience, so that it could not righteously be avoided? What Law of God required it? It was either voluntary,—positively chosen as an end; or involuntary,—negatively incurred, as incident to a career having ends that came across it. If the former, the Moral claim for it is relinquished: for death, embraced as an end, is simply suicide, and, instead of fulfilling, violates the Divine Law. If the latter, it needs to be shown under what moral exigency, in the discharge of what duty, it was encountered. Till this is done, it escapes appreciation by the Conscience, and is dishonoured by vain words of reverence: and when this is done, it surely loses the mysterious character assigned to it, and becomes simply the supreme case of martyrdom. For what *is* martyrdom, but death incurred in preference to the

denial of truth or the evasion of some righteous claim? Are our authors content with this description of the cross? Placing its sanctity and acceptableness on no magical ground, but on the same footing with the whole devoted life which preceded it, they ought to set it in the clear light of real human obligation; to show what pure affection required it, what authoritative call would have been disregarded in declining it. They seem to us to speak as if self-sacrifice had some holy character and efficacy of its own, apart from the righteous claim in fidelity to which it is freely incurred; as if Christ even made it *his end to show us the path* of self-sacrifice:—an end that must defeat itself; since, by its presence, it would convert his act into the empty spectacle of throwing himself away; instead of illustrating the solemn conflicts of inward allegiance in which life itself must yield. If there is to be any reality in his self-surrender on Calvary, if it is to prevail over us by any true appeal, it must have an intelligible character of its own, either as an inseparable part of a life faithful to its highest inspiration, or as having some separate end justifying and consecrating the sacrifice. We consult our authors in vain for an answer to the question, what was the problem which required Christ to die? They reject the plain answer of most divines,—"to divert to himself the penalties of men's sins." They do not really mean to sanction the theatrical doctrine of "example." They would probably shrink from reducing the case to that of martyrdom. Yet they throw the whole stress of the offering upon its *moral* element of intrinsic rightness and recall it from the realm of the magical to the region of *character*. They cut off the mass of arbitrary consequences appended by the ordinary forensic theory to the death on Calvary; yet transfer to their own simple and spiritual view the mystic elevation of language which belongs only to what they have left behind. They never escape the vicious circle: the cross was holy, because it was endured to save mankind: and it saves mankind, by being holy. In the one proposition, they pay

homage to theological fiction: in the other, to moral and historical truth. It is a vain attempt to serve both masters.

(2) The extension of God's complacency in Christ's offering over the whole of mankind is unexplained; and, we venture to add, inexplicable without resuming the very principle of substitution which has been discarded. He offered, it is said, *our nature* spotless before heaven, and made it acceptable again. Yes; but God's displeasure was not,—no *moral* displeasure can be,—against *a Nature*: it was, and is, and ever must be, only against the unfaithful *Will*; and the Wills of men are not *generic*, but *individual*: they cannot be fused together into a representative type,—himself also a free personality,—and change from deformity to beauty, with the Light of his life. The obedience of Christ was the obedience, not of *humanity*, but of *a* man,—of his own individual soul, in dealing with the special problems, the incommunicable responsibilities, the lonely sorrows and temptations, of a life particular and even unique; and to extend it beyond this personal circle, to speak as if, by merely being human, Pontius Pilate and Caligula and Messalina and Borgia acquired a share in it, and lay less deep within the shadow of God's disapproval, is to contradict the inalienableness of all moral trusts, and make character vicarious. As well might you say, conversely, that the guilt of Judas Iscariot was the guilt of "human nature," and must have made us all odious in the sight of heaven. There are some departments of thought in which, we believe, Mr. Maurice's Platonic Realism has a just application. But against its entrance on the region of the Conscience and gathering up our infinitely distributed trusts into an incarnate εἶδος of humanity, we must earnestly protest. Obligation cannot be discharged by deputy; cannot be met but in the concrete. Christ, as obedient and holy in his humanity, was one man; and we are *other* men: and no "propitiation for *our* sins" can be got out of *his* righteousness, without removing the essence of all moral distinctions whatsoever.

In our authors' doctrine, then, on this ancient subject, we find the old phenomenon repeated: it is clear and sound in what it removes; confused and incomprehensible in what it retains. It is no wonder. Theological literature is one protracted testimony to the unmanageableness of this favourite topic. It seems to have a fatal fascination in it; —doubtless because to people who think at all it can never offer any real repose. One divine after another of powerful intellect approaches it, with the same invariable result; that either his Logic or his Ethics go to pieces at once. When Butler resorted to the plea that, notwithstanding the ill-look of the doctrine, there were uglier things to be found in the real world; when Jonathan Edwards, with his inexorable reasoning, had to define Moral relations in a way to secure their absence from his path; when Magee could only browbeat his opponents, and, as Mr. Garden observes, evade the knot of the whole question; when a writer who could so well expound the principles of reasoning as Dr. Thomson in his *Outlines of the Laws of Thought*, could so ill exemplify them in his Bampton Lectures on the Atonement;—we may be excused perhaps for suggesting that the solution is still missing; not for want of genius to work it out, but because the problem is imaginary, and the answer impossible. The doctrine arose out of a picture or programme of the universe and human life which, though still hung up on many a church-wall, has no real truth for the modern understanding, no daily presence to the inward eye. The human sense of sin and consciousness of moral infirmity have assumed, if a less passionate, perhaps a deeper and a truer form; in which a more discriminating measure is taken of guilt, and its purely personal nature is felt to remove it from possibilities of exchange. Theories of salvation are always correlative with theories of perdition: and since the vision of eternal ruin, as the rule for the human race, has passed from among credible realities and descended to the rank of ecclesiastical scene-painting, the scheme for exceptional rescue, constructed by divines out

of misinterpreted Scripture, is felt to be artificial too. So long as men believed themselves helplessly sold and made over to some one who meant to torture them,—whether to the Devil, as the ancient Church supposed, or to a judicial God unable to remit, as modern theology pretends,—so long as, in their view, some one's rights over them had to be bought off ere they could be set free for true obedience and hope, the language which described "Salvation," "Redemption," "Satisfaotion," "Propitiation," as an objective arrangement or supernatural "expedient" devised on their behalf, had an exact and congenial meaning. But now the disciple is told, with infinitely deeper truth, that the terrible claimant from whom he needs deliverance is *himself:* and to this inner thraldom, the old programme of an outer rescue negotiated for him has no proper application. All that can be said in harmony with it is this;—that he cannot, by any act of volition, be his own deliverer; that, to take him out of himself, he needs a real object, better than himself, as well as an inner power higher than his will; and that, if ever he is to know the law of self-surrender, as the sole reconciliation of the human spirit with the Divine, it can only be by the appeal of a realized self-sacrifice, in which life becomes the simple organ giving the Will of God a conscious way. As in the case of the "Incarnation," so in this of the "Atonement," the truth which remains on hand is not special to the person of Christ, but human and universal, revealed to us through its perfect embodiment in him. For our humanity there is no way of reconciliation and Divine peace, but the path of self-sacrifice: the glory of its sorrows and the opening lights at its end, we see in him who entered it for us: and all in every age who have faith to follow him refresh the emblem of the cross with new meanings, and "fill up what remains of the sufferings of Christ."

We have followed our Tractarians chiefly in their discussion of the interior of Christian doctrine; because it is here alone that their characteristics, as a distinct class of theo-

logians, come into view. The grand prior question, however,—of the possibility and fact of supernatural revelation at all,—is treated in two of the *Tracts;* with especial reference to the credibility of Miracles, by Mr. Davies; and to the atheistic conception of Natural Laws, by Mr. Ludlow. The main positions taken up by the former appear to us wisely chosen and well defended: that to minds unprepared by faith in a living God, and sympathy with the spiritual elements of the religion of Christ, miracles must remain now, what Scripture shows them to have been at first, unconvincing prodigies: that when the order of persuasion is reversed, and they issue from one already recognized, on higher grounds, as Founder of a "Kingdom of Heaven," they cease to encounter any formidable resistance, but are left in their place as outer "signs" of that kingdom: that instead, therefore, of setting them as the base, they should rather come in as the crown of faith, not so much supporting, as showing conspicuously and far, the form and structure of the Divine government to which they belong. The theologian who disputes this principle, and insists on the logical cogency of the miracles as proofs, ought to explain how it is that they do not practically exercise this force,—that they are the difficulty rather than the resource of the "Christian advocate" in dealing with doubt,—and that they have come to be no longer a real power for aggression, but the chief object of defence, even with writers on "the Evidences." Mr. Davies, in common with two or three of his coadjutors, attributes the alienation of scientific men from the idea of miracle to a false definition of it as a violation or suspension of law; and claims back their allegiance on the plea that, instead of violating, it fulfils law, and reveals an order higher than that which it seems to break. He regards the "mighty works" of Christ as no less *natural* to his place in the scale of being, and no more wonderful except to observers at a lower point, than the brilliant marvels which a Faraday might display before an assembly of astonished savages. And were it even to prove

within the resources of future science to repeat at will the very acts recorded in the gospels, their Divine character and function would in no way be affected. This answer seems to us, we must confess, to miss the point of the objector's scruple; and, in order to render the miracles credible, to deprive them of all religious value. If they are merely the exercise of a *higher art*, the anticipation of a *skill* to be learned hereafter by those who marvel at it now, they manifest nothing but superior knowledge and such command of the methods of Nature as might be attainable in a godless world. The proper treatment of them in that case would be a close scrutiny of the scientific conditions of their performance, till the rules were detected by which they gained their end; and, the moment this was done, their characteristic impression would be lost, and rationalism would have established its case. In proportion as the Agent himself was of truthful and earnest mind,—a Faraday, or such as a Faraday would revere,—he would be eager for this result, eager to explain and impart the method of his procedure, and take the seeming mystery and magic away. He would never use his power as an instrument of persuasion and authority in matters moral and spiritual with which it had no inner connexion. In short, *a miracle by scientific process* is self-condemned; for the whole religious meaning of miracle consists in this,—that it is an immediate creation of Will, as distinguished from the mediate elaborations of method: the latter being the beaten track of docile intelligence adapting itself to the given usages of nature; the former the exercise of a personal causality transcending those usages, such as the Author of them could alone impart. Take away this meaning; and how can it any longer be said, that miracles startle and refresh the earth with the recovered sense of living Divine Power? That they do this is due to their acceptance as direct products of lordly and originating Will, as opposed to the procured results of obedient and sequacious intelligence.

Whether the phenomena thus issued are properly

described as exceptions to "natural law," or examples of it, must depend on the range of definition given to the word "Natural," and separating it from "Supernatural." The word is not of stationary and absolute significance, but always has tacit reference to some "Nature," adopted for the moment as a standard: and means *agreeable to the nature*,—it may be of GOD, or of the perceptible UNIVERSE, or of MAN. With the last of these the present question has no concern. To God, as all-comprehending, the miraculous and the ordinary are no doubt "natural" alike, determined into existence conformably with the supreme order of his mind, and the spontaneous rules of a Will which excludes confusion and caprice. In reference, then, to this, the ultimate home of reality, it is perfectly true that miracles (assuming their occurrence) must be instances, and not violations, of "natural law." Nobody, we suppose, ever imagined the contrary, or sanctioned the idea that God issued them on no rule or principle at all. It is not usual, except in pantheistic speculation, to carry the word "Nature" up to that height: and not till we limit it to the physical Universe, can we reasonably ask what is, and what is not, in conformity with "Natural Law,"—*i.e.*, with the method constituted for the given class of cases. There is no way of solving such a question except by comparing the phenomenon with the ascertained rule for its usual production, and seeing how far it is *en règle*. By this test, a miracle is surely irreducible to natural law. Its very essence is, to be exceptional to the event's own proper law: and whoever affirms it to fall under another, which, however, he cannot find and name, does but whisper its supernatural character away by a gratuitous surmise. He may still, it is true, regard it as a *Divine act;* because he may look on all that happens, in the orderly vicissitude of things, as the immediate product of God's living Will, and may regard the "*laws*" of the world as only the rules, and its alleged "*forces*" as only the types, of his single Power. But, in thus abolishing the distinction between pretended

Secondary Causes and the one Primary, he leaves unremoved the difference between the usual and the exceptional mode of Divine activity. The former is what we mean by natural law; the latter, by miracle. In the one, God proceeds in fidelity to a method laid down as a basis for human expectations: in the other, we conceive him to act, *pro re natâ*, out of those moral affections which are the real background of all the order of the world, but which the custom of things is apt to hide from our dull eye. This *free* agency, straight out of the ultimate springs of the Spirit, unhindered by pledged usage, seems to us to give the true conception of the "Supernatural." *Nature* is the sphere and system of God's self-prescribed methods of reliable evolution of phenomena: but above and beyond nature he is *Spirit;* including nature indeed as part of its expression; but, instead of being all committed to nature, transcending it on every side, and opening a life of communion with the spirits that can reflect himself. All is thus his agency: Nature, his fixed Will; Spirit, his free Will. To take miracle from the latter, and hand it over to the former, is to strip it of its especial interest as an expression of character, while setting up for it an inferior claim which cannot possibly be substantiated. We know the law to which the act of walking on the sea would present an indisputable exception. We know of none which it would exemplify; and indulge an unauthorized fancy in supposing it.

The anxiety, then, to shift past miracles into the domain of future science appears to us mistaken. And after all, it is beyond the reach of any philosophical revision of theory to touch the real difficulties of this question. Its decision is practically reserved, not for the metaphysician, but for the historical critic; and must arise, not sweepingly by the adjustment of an idea, but in detail, by patient estimate of narratives, taken one by one. "Signs and wonders," however related to nature and to God, are not self-evidencing things;—but reported facts, whose intrinsic

credibility, even at the strongest, is liable to be forfeited by testimonial defects. It is not when we sit at a vague distance, but when we go into the interior detail of Scripture, that the real elements of this inquiry present themselves. Who are our informants? What were their sources of knowledge? Do they agree? Are they free from distorting media of observation? Are they all of equal value? or must discrimination be exercised upon their mixed material?—such are the questions on which, for the practical English mind, this controversy hinges. On these Mr. Davies does not enter: but it is a good service to rid the field of those prejudgments against miracle which, too often, intercept the just impression of the sacred writings.

Mr. Ludlow writes in Dialogue; first, a short vindication of earnest Doubt; and then two discussions, forming the seventh (and latest) Tract, on Laws of Nature, and on Positive Philosophy. All these are striking and noble productions, marked by the same manliness and moral *verve* which give character to the *Religio Laici*, with stronger support from an acute and reflective intellect. It is the inherent disadvantage of polemic dialogue written by one side, that it can hardly do justice to both: and the Comtian interlocutor of the seventh Tract suffers himself to be beaten on such easy terms, that Messrs. Mill and Buckle, we fancy, would hardly accept the verdict, but would move for a new trial. As a set-off, however, there are concessions very needlessly, as we think, made to Comte, especially to that singular generalization from his personal psychology, the three-fold law; which has always appeared to us to have every refutation which history can give to it, and no evidence beyond its own compactness. Every thing "three-fold" seems to have a charm and mystery ready for Mr. Ludlow, as a new outcome of the Trinity: he discovers it in Comte's law; in the Pauline "spirit, soul, and body;" in the relations of "force, law, and order" in the Kosmos; and of "power, wisdom, and goodness" in morals. It is

the instinct of an imaginative mind to trace forests of wonder in the frost-work of abstractions thrown upon its window; and it were idle to discuss what a glance may create and a breath dissolve. Far deeper things than these are brought out by our author's dialectic. He thoroughly understands the strong position held by wise defenders of old faiths in relation to the new philosophy; viz., that they adopt all its affirmations, and question only its denials. He is prepared to go along with it through the whole length of its field,—observation, induction, grouping and hierarchy of laws; to allow unreservedly its right of guidance to the furthest verge of perceptible phenomena; to welcome every glimpse it may open into fresh reaches of time and space, or unsuspected tissues of relation. Only when it begins to build a blind barrier on the confines of its own province, and set up its notice that nothing lies beyond but the limbo of vanity, does he limit his allegiance, and, while bowing to its Positive science, dispute its Positive omni-science. The whole process of knowledge,—the logic of method,—involves in it certain preconceptions of Reason and postulates of Faith; without which Induction could never mount from Fact to Law; in virtue of which the idea of Force steals in unseen among the "uniformities"; and, in defiance of prohibition, the quest of causes, not Efficient only, but Final too, insinuates itself into researches which least intend it. The several threads of this clue, furnished by the very constitution of the human intellect, our author gathers up and traces to their ultimate indication of a Supreme and Living Will. He draws attention to some of those pathetic traces, which can have escaped no careful reader of the *Philosophie Positive*, of an unconscious faith in Comte, deeper than his conscious doctrine. From the exposition of a system which denies purpose in nature, and any thing superior to man, it is strange to hear that our higher capacities are "*the ends for which* the organic life exists,"—that there is "*a need of eternity* inherent in our nature,"—that there will always "*appear above us a type of real perfection* below which we must still remain, though it

invites our persevering efforts to continued approximation"; but such involuntary testimonies are sure to push themselves through some crevices of even the compactest logical denial; and betray the indestructible seed of spiritual truth where there seems neither soil nor dew to let it grow. Of the attempt, by creating a diversion in favour of outward "experience," to stifle such germs of higher faith, Mr. Ludlow indignantly asks—

Do you think you can silence these obstinate questionings of man's spirit by that parrot-cry of 'facts!' 'confine yourself to facts'?—'Confine myself to facts?' the spirit answers; 'why, I struggle to do so, but they will not let me; they drive me away from them to where they seem facts no longer, but mere shadows and semblances of mightier realities, of a world unseen, of a kingdom which cannot be moved. Facts! But your participle implies a verb, *quis fecit?* Who made these facts which you told me to study, and wherefore were they made? You bid me observe succession; but where is the first, and where the last? You bid me dwell on similitude, but where is the pattern from whence it flows, the standard whereby it is to be measured? You speak of order and harmony: I crave for them; I have glimpses of them every now and them, never lasting, never satisfying; merely as flashes from a hidden realm of light. But as often that order and harmony seem to have entirely vanished amid disorder and confusion inextricable, or else they are themselves stern, pitiless, crushing. I cannot believe in them when I miss their presence; I cannot cherish them when I feel them grating on me and overwhelming me, unless I believe in a quenchless source from which they spring, in an unseen sphere wherein they dwell, in an abiding Power which uses them with unfailing wisdom, for purposes of all-embracing love. Give me that faith, and I shall be able, with the great Florentine, to see written on the very gates of everlasting woe the words of fire—

"Fecemi la Divina Potestate,
La somma Sapienza e 'l Prima Amore."

Deny me that faith, and if I am to forego all looking before and after; if I am to shut myself up with the everlasting riddle of this universe, having no other occupation than to observe the relations between "my first," "my second," "my third," "my whole," carefully abstaining from the word itself,

I tell you that two pennyworth of gin will give me an easier and pleasanter *anæsthesia* than all your Positive Philosophy.'" (No. VII. p. 43.)

We have no fear of any extensive religious insensibility from the influence of the Positive Philosophy. There is a thirst in human nature which is not reached by the flat and bitter waters of such a Lethe; and which will take men, when its first delusive sleep is over, to purer and perennial fountains. We have a much more fatal indifference to apprehend from the spreading habit of insincere profession and uneasy acquiescence than from any exceptional boldness of honest disbelief. The crisis which is calling forth these *Tracts* is a most serious one; and, with the partial exception of their authors, no one is prepared to meet it with any appreciation of its real significance. The publication and immense diffusion of the *Essays and Reviews* means this,—that the intellectual part of English Society is in revolt against the received form of Christianity, and snatching at the hope of something truer and deeper. The fact, indeed, has long ceased to be a secret. The whole tone of the current literature,—the artificial separation of religious books into a class by themselves,—the decent reticence or ill-concealed contempt of public writers and political men,—the increasing refusal of an ecclesiastical career by Academic students of highest promise,—the eager welcome of such volumes as Frederick Robertson's by educated people who will read no other theology,—are unmistakable symptoms of alienation from the recognized standards of belief. To the ripest mind and character of this age, the creeds speak a foreign language and reach no home within. The studious and learned have come to know that the Scriptures, though the richest sources of spiritual light, cannot be sustained in the oracular position which has been assigned to them. The whole theory of life,—silently felt rather than deliberately thought,—has irrevocably changed; consecrating this world, disenchanting the other of a thousand terrors; softening every curse,

deepening every trust; blending the colours of nature and of grace; and finding the mysteries of eternity already present at every hour of time. No one, we are persuaded, can associate habitually with those classes whose mental and moral habitudes are the surest augury of our social future, without a profound conviction that the dogmatic Protestantism of the sixteenth century is fast dying out of the life of the nineteenth. And the ominous peculiarity is this,—that it is apparently dying a natural death, without violence, without conspiracy, without ill-will,—nay, amid the embraces and the tears of those from whose hearts it is torn and whose childhood it nurtured. To charge this class,—which grows in the atmosphere of letters, science, and moral refinement,—with any wilful alienation,—with the offences of 'impiety' and 'infidelity,' so ready on the ecclesiastical tongue,—is a futile injury. Amid the decay of formulated doctrine among them, a true reverence, we believe, prevailingly remains for the great moral and spiritual characteristics of the Christian faith, and an open susceptibility to any Divine light that goes home to the veracities of thought and conscience. Is this state of things to have no meaning and give no warning? Are those who, like the authors of *Essays and Reviews*, recognize it and try to disengage the imperishable spirit from the transitory form of faith to be refuted by Canon Law, and removed from a Church which has no room for living thought? Then it will be understood that the Church of the Nation excommunicates the Intellect of the Nation, and is content to rest on the Squirarchy, the Farmers, and a portion of the Tradesmen, relying on its social stability and not on its spiritual power. Such a severance we cannot but regard as degrading while it lasts and fatal in its end. The Religion which cannot encompass and vivify the whole of life, glorifying its thought, refining its art, sweetening its poetry, as well as ordering its affections and ennobling its action, is no longer the true expression of Him without whom nothing is; and in losing its transcendency, parts with its essence, and abdicates its power.

XII.

THE CRISIS OF FAITH.*

WITH all their difference of tendency, these three volumes have several features in common: they are by men among the foremost of their age: they are upon the highest subjects of human thought: and they are distinctly retrospective; pronouncing on the religious changes of a whole generation, and counselling the world from the advanced posts of a rich personal experience. The French statesman, the German critic, the English ecclesiastic, all moved by agitations of belief,—in which the last two have themselves been chief agents,—take measure of them from different points of view; and tell us how they affect society, theology, and the Church. The appearance of three such books within the same year, and still more their reception among educated men, bear impressive witness to the fermenting elements of doubt and faith in the intellect of our time.

Every age is perhaps vain enough to fancy its own crises the most momentous: and its pretensions to originality may always be plausibly rebuked by citing from the past

* "Meditations on the Essence of Christianity and on the Religious Questions of the Day." By M. Guizot. London, 1864.
"Das Leben Jesu für das deutsche Volk bearbeitet." Von David Friedrich Strauss. Leipzig, 1864.
"Apologia pro vita sua: being a Reply to a Pamphlet entitled 'What, then, does Dr. Newman mean?'" By John Henry Newman, D.D. London, 1864.—*National Review*, 1864.

some apparent parallels to its speculations. To get rid of a troublesome discoverer or vigorous thinker, there is no readier way,—and it has the advantage of being at once cheap and stinging,—than to dismiss his new ideas as stale fallacies dug up again out of the discarded rubbish of the past. This is the buffet which lazy commonplace delights to inflict on every man who threatens to leave a mark upon his age. Lessing and Schleiermacher were only Spinoza in disguise. Coleridge was but Schelling done into English. In Maurice, we have the Cambridge Platonists again. Were not Chillingworth forgotten, Newman and the Tractarians could never show their face. What do Strauss and what do the Tübingen school offer but minor varieties of the old "exploded rationalism?" If Germany has recovered from Eichhorn and Gesenius, England will recover from Colenso. And if we have forgotten the Deists of the last century, what is to keep in memory the Freethinkers and Latitudinarians of this? This mode of dealing with the phenomena of our time may satisfy a theologian whose critical discernment just enables him to divide mankind into two classes,—"Infidels" and "Christians,"—and who binds up all literature under these two labels, as he fuses all the books of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into one "Bible." But how weak and false it is can be no secret to anyone who can really compare the present with the past; and is dimly felt, if not confessed, in the evident alarm of all churches and the religious suspense of intellectual and scholarly men everywhere. Whoever can look beneath the surface must be aware that the present crisis of faith is far deeper and wider than any since the Reformation,—perhaps we might say, since the apostolic age; deeper, as reaching more fundamental problems; wider, as affecting the inner life of the whole civilized world. He will not be deceived by the loud voices of unyielding dogmatism, and the hard features of professional advocacy; but will mark the multiplying signs of spiritual perplexity, and overhear the running whisper of prayer for more light. Setting aside the

party-leaders,—whose function it is to show a bold front to the last,—we trace, in the interior of every school, the consciousness of some weakness, the inability to deal effectively with the charges against it. What were the Munich Conferences, what was the *Home and Foreign Review*, but a confession, within the bosom of Romanism itself, of uneasy relations between ecclesiastical immutability and scientific progression? Whence the new literature which disturbs the decorum of the Anglican Church in her universities, courts, and dioceses, but from the overpowering discovery that the old Scripturalism is hopelessly at issue with assured results of historical criticism? The Evangelical, losing courage for his insults against the nobleness of humanity and the righteousness of God, escapes into washy platitudes that soak away the logic out of his system, and spoil the "economy of grace," without restoring the wholesomeness of nature. The Maurice school, after transferring the doctrinal centre of gravity from the Atonement to the Incarnation, and gathering history and life into a Divine order around it, stop short with showing us its solemnity, and, to those who do not find it self-evident, are quite helpless to exhibit its reality; or, if they listen to the demand for producible evidence, stake their case mainly upon a gospel whose historical authority, to say the least, is exceedingly precarious; and on an exegesis as ingenious indeed and spiritually deep, but also as uncritical, as Philo's. The Unitarian, long accused of making much of the evidences and little of the substance of Revelation, now redresses the balance by withdrawing his stress upon the miracles; yet, without them, is at a loss, consistently with his traditional philosophy and his view of the person of Christ, how to distinguish revealed from natural religion. Nor are the symptoms wanting of a similar self-distrust beyond the circle of Christian believers. The simple Theism which suffices to sweeten and consecrate the individual life cannot play the missionary to the souls of multitudes, and feels the want of that mysterious authority which separates living faith from

mere philosophy. The speculative wanderings of Renan's later pantheism are but the self-confessions of a desolate and homeless spirit. And even those men of science who have filled the whole capacity of their belief with physical laws, and left no room for anything diviner, feel themselves both unable to meet the religious constitution of humanity, and indisposed, as their modest reticence betrays, to despise it as a malformation, entailing only infirmity and superstition. Or if, among a few teachers of secondary rank (like Rudenhausen, the author of "Isis"), atheism grows loud and dogmatic, it is disapproved by the foremost men, not on grounds of prudence and tenderness only, but as defying an instinct which cannot be unmeaning, and, by assumption of discord, preventing the separate voices of our nature from feeling their way to harmony.

Throughout all these schools a visible uneasiness and instability prevail. Whatever strength they have is merely relative, as against each other; not inherent and self-sufficing, enabling any one to stand alone and face the last criteria of reality. Each of them has its historical justification, as a protest against some excess or absurdity into which its predecessors had run: each has its turn of opportunity on a rival's unguarded side; but there is scarce one which, if you clear the polemic field and take its enemies away, can show any native and inalienable right to the domain it claims, or hold its footing among the perpetuities of a peaceful world. Where would Catholicism be, under the light of modern thought, if it could not point to the weakness, the divisions, the half-logic of Protestantism? And where Protestantism, be it Anglican or Puritan, but for the theocratic ambition, the Mariolatry, the childish supernaturalism, of the Roman Church? What hold could Socinianism have taken, had not orthodoxy been incredible? And what could orthodoxy keep, were not Socinianism unscriptural? The influence of Mr. Maurice's writings is quite intelligible as a phenomenon of *comparative* theology; for men are thankful enough for deliverance from a doc-

trine of never-ending sin and preponderant damnation, and soul-saving by opinion; and trace with joy, in the world's history and the depths of their own hearts, the living vestiges of a Personal Divine Guide, whose righteousness means to triumph in the end. But apart from this relation to antecedent dogmas, can any impartial observer find in the system itself,—with its apparent Ditheism, and its metaphysical manipulation of Scripture terms of time and space,—a product that can stand either in philosophy or in criticism? The changes of individual faith from one of these schemes to another are seldom difficult to explain; there is ever some shadow to escape, and some light to reach. But can we imagine that anyone of trained and balanced faculties, taking up *ab initio* the great problems on which the sects pronounce, could anywhere recognize the solution that gave him rest?

What remedies are there for this state of things? The usual "three courses," we are told, are open to us. Dr. Newman, at one extreme, recommends and exemplifies reactionary retreat to mediæval Catholicism. Strauss, at the other, leads the advance into pure Humanism. Guizot interposes with a conservative position, and entrenches the whole camp of Christian orthodoxy; and, in pledge of his firmness, expels as a deserter the devout, the accomplished, the persuasive, but too "neological" Athanase Coquerel. None of these methods can we accept. Not the first; because history cannot be forced to repeat itself, and the conditions of Catholic obedience in belief are at variance with modern knowledge. Not the second; because it empties religion of all its objective realities, and reduces our highest guidance to a mere human idealism, painting its images on the air. Not the third; because it ignores the indubitable gains of recent thought and research, spoils the Scriptures by untenable pretensions, and misconstrues the word by inadequate interpretation. Could we even accept the conclusions of the retrogade or conservative theologians, we should take exception to their method of

persuasion. They do not deal with us as with those who simply wish to see things as they are. They escape from the plain question of *fact* into endless considerations of *possibility;* as if everything not impossible were actual; as if, because there is a Power adequate to a miracle, therefore certain miracles have been; as if, because birth-sin would account for the evil in the world, we are to accept it for the real cause; and as if, because original agreement among the Apostles would explain the subsequent Unity of the Church, we must assume their doctrinal concurrence in face of all appearances. Far worse, however, than this abuse of hypotheses,—to which all researches are more or less exposed,—is the favourite argument of theologians,—the appeal to *fear.* Either Catholic or Atheist, take your choice, says Dr. Newman. Either the Incarnation or Pantheism, as you may see in Renan, says M. Guizot. The men of newer science too faithfully imitate the tone, and say in their turn, "You must either come over to Darwin and us, or go to church with the rest, while churches remain." Come whence it may, this threat of consequences betrays a mind estranged alike from philosophy and faith; a mind struggling in the currents of partizan opinion and not surrendered to the ultimate reality of things. Why try to frighten us with images of terror, which, if we have to embrace them, will be terror no more, and if we blindly fly them, will send us to no security of truth? If there *were* no God, would you have us still believe in him? Were he no more than the impersonal order of the universe, would you have us think of him as personal? If Christ were simply Man, would you have us suppose him God, for fear of resembling Renan? And if eternal things should actually be as the Church prayers say, would you, young naturalists, shame us out of our response, simply to make a louder shout that Darwin has explained it all? There is no more certain indication of a vitiated intellect, bereft of its natural trust and reverence, than this attempt to regulate belief by antipathy and alarm. In proportion as a man's

mind is veracious, he will despise such teaching, and be abashed, if ever he has managed himself, or been managed, by it; and will not only insist on seeing things just as they are, but while doing so, feel absolute repose in the thought that the universe is sure to turn out better than had been expected, and that what God has made true, no one, on acquaintance, ever found to be horrible. Illusions fascinate only while they last, and are never regretted when they are gone; and even to those who, in a kind of honest despair, say "Let us know the worst," it ceases to be the worst by being known. There is no deliverance, we are convinced, for troubled faith and a distracted Christendom, but in simple surrender to the clue of truth, patiently followed to its issues, through every track opened by modern research.

The total inefficiency of inferior methods and of the alarmist spirit is rendered painfully evident by M. Guizot's "Meditations." Had they remained as personal musings upon the pages of his private journal, and been ultimately used as biographical material, they would have gracefully filled in some missing lines in the portraiture of his genius and character. But, published by himself, they must be tried by a different rule: either as an individual declaration of opinion, the delivery of a weighty suffrage at a critical moment; or as a substantive treatise, intended to influence the logical balance of controversy, and help in the determination of doubtful questions. For the first purpose too much is said; for the second too little. We should have thought a good deal of the vote, if it had not been for the argument; but even the great authority of M. Guizot's judgment flows away and is lost in the dilute and feeble stream of reasoning to which it here commits itself. Unless in the succeeding volumes there is a reserve of strength of which there is as yet no premonitory sign, this book will only illustrate once more, how, on religious topics, men of rich and practised intellect can satisfy themselves with reasonings which in any other application would be dismissed as too puerile to be seriously meant. The fact bears

impressive witness to the depth of religious faith in human nature; but is a grave injury to religious philosophy.

The defence set up by M. Guizot avowedly limits itself to the common essence of all Christianity; and applies to the doctrines of "the Creation, Providence, Original Sin, the Incarnation, and the Redemption. These," he affirms, "constitute the essence of the Christian religion, and all who believe in these dogmas I hold to be Christians," (p. 16). And to these five "dogmas" he adds elsewhere (p. 13), "the Inspiration of the Scriptures;" the denial of which, no less than of the others, "virtually destroys the foundations of faith in all the belief of Christians." We will not pause to inquire by what right our Author requires of every disciple the full-blown dogmatic system of the fourth and fifth centuries, and excommunicates not only the whole body of Arians, but the mass of believers in the first generation, including the personal attendants on Jesus himself. We will only say, that no fact in history is better ascertained than that the theological scheme which he indentifies with the religion of Christ was of very gradual growth; that, if tried by it, the Church of even the third century would be found wanting; and that it had no place among the Jewish Christians who were the earliest depositaries of the faith. Waiving this, we will take the definition as we find it; and observe that it plainly consists of two parts; the five dogmas constituting a substantive theology, or theory of the Divine and human relations; while the sixth portion,—"the Inspiration of the Scriptures,"—is the logical instrument for proving the others, such of them at least as are not doctrines of natural religion. "The Incarnation," for instance, does not profess to be discoverable by any but supernatural evidence; it is an event belonging to two worlds, and involving in both exceptional phenomena beyond the range of ordinary observation and testimony: for our knowledge of it we must be entirely dependent on information, not human, but Divine; and to afford ground for our belief in it, the

Scriptures must make good a claim of unerring inspiration *quoad hoc*. It is vain, therefore, to discuss the theology, till we have examined the organon of proof. We shall take the liberty, accordingly, of inverting our Author's order; and, to begin at the beginning, shall look first into the topic of his sixth meditation,—the Inspiration of the Scriptures; keeping our eye steadily fixed on a single definite point, whether *such* a biblical inspiration is made out, as suffices to establish the fact of "the Incarnation."

In answer to such a question, it is irrelevant to dwell upon the unique religious impression produced by the sacred books, and assume this as the sure "characteristic of Divine inspiration" (p. 144). The deep response we return to many an utterance of Hebrew prophet or Christian apostle shows, indeed, how truly they had descended to the unwasting springs of human trust and aspiration: and whoever passes thither, doubtless reaches a living communion with God, and is sharer in his spirit. But these Divine susceptibilities are no guarantee of historical accuracy or doctrinal truth. They are concomitants alike of a childish and of a comprehensive faith; and, beyond the range of our sympathy with them, open to us no new knowledge of Divine things. The very psalms which breathe some of the deepest tones of human penitence and piety contain, in neighbouring verses bursts of vindictive passion revolting to every pure and humane mind. The very prophets who show the grandest insight into the spiritual government of the world, go astray in their historical anticipations, and announce what was never fulfilled. The very Evangelists who record,—nay, if they are to be believed, the very Jesus who spake,—the Sermon on the Mount, were under the illusion that the world had not a generation to last, and proclaimed the return of Messiah to Judgment as an event which his hearers would witness in their lifetime. These admitted facts bring the highest religious light into combination with the intellectual shadows of humanity; and if you dazzle us with the former till we

shut our eyes to the latter, you do but cheat us out of true vision.

No man, indeed, who is so well abreast of the culture of his age as M. Guizot, can dream of claiming anything like a universal infallibility for the Scriptures. He admits, accordingly, and in no grudging measure, the presence in them of the "human element," not merely as variously colouring, without ever tainting, the flow of unerring thought, but as carrying with it, wherever it was free to enter, all the natural liabilities to mistake. Do we ask for a line of demarcation, to shut off the fallibilities on one side, and reserve the revelation on the other? We are supplied, in answer, with three different distinctions, apparently assumed as identical. 1. On Religion and Morals, the Scriptures are inspired; on other subjects they share the conditions of all literature (p. 146). 2. The Infinite alone is the matter of Revelation; while the finite world is freely surrendered to the scrutiny of our faculties (p. 148). 3. Only what is beyond the reach of human cognizance is divinely disclosed; for all else the sacred books speak the language used and understood by the generations to whom they are addressed (p. 149). All biblical statements, therefore, on religion and morals, on the infinite world, on inaccessible things, we are to accept with unquestioning faith. We will not say that it is impossible for M. Guizot sincerely to abide by these tests, for when we find him declaring that throughout the Jewish Scriptures the idea of God is absolutely self-identical, and "without the least tincture of anthropomorphism," we appreciate the medium through which he reads the page, and make unlimited allowance for its effect. But who that comes face to face with the Hebrew literature can work with them for an hour? Will he bind himself to receive all that is attributed to God, the "jealous," the "repenting," who sups with one patriarch and wrestles with another; who invites Abraham to human sacrifice, and then lets him off because he takes it for a call of piety, instead of a temptation to crime; who sanctions the cruelties of Saul to the Amalekites, and the

treachery of David in "hanging up before the Lord" the seven sons of his predecessor? Will he own the Mosaic law as Divine, with its scanty lines of primary duty, buried in the overwhelming mass of ritual legislation? Yet these are matters of "morals and religion." Or, to take the second test, can he accept as true all the biblical conceptions of what lies beyond this finite world?—of the solitudes before its creation?—of the time, the mode, the agencies, which are to bring it to a close?—of the Hades where the spirits of the dead are reserved?—of the Heaven where the court of Angels is held?—of the mid-region left free to the spirits of evil? If these "perspectives of infinity," are dissolved into mere symbols, what are the realities that remain, beyond the grand primary truths of a Moral Providence and an Immortal Life, which in other nations have been clothed in other dress? And this brings us to the third test. If only the undiscoverable is taught by inspiration, the duties of men to one another, and the relations of which they are conscious towards God, can no more be the subject of Revelation than the sciences or history: for in the Conscience and spiritual nature of man there is no less provision for moral and religious apprehension, than in his Perceptions and Intellect for interpretation of the physical world. With what consistency can you say in one breath, "Inspiration speaks only of the undiscoverable;" yet, in the next, quote among its most solemn words, prohibitions of theft, murder, and adultery?

Who indeed that reflects on the shifting boundary between science and religion would undertake to run such a line through the Bible? Science traces finite causation till it is lost in the Infinite; Religion, the Infinite cause till it appears in the finite: and the border-land must ever be common to the two. Now that you know the Mosaic cosmogony to be false, you may dismiss it with an easy word into the limbo of superseded science: but to the writer who believed it, it was very solemn religion. The unity of the human race, now that it has become doubtful, you may treat as an open question of physiology, and

regard the story of Adam and Eve as a speculation in natural history: but with those who hold it, it is the corner-stone of the world's moral economy; the Fall, the ruined nature, the Redemption, collapsing the moment it is removed. You may make light of the doctrine of demoniacal possession, as a mere misinterpretation of disease: but with what eye would the synoptic evangelists have looked on you, if you had taken from them the witness which "the spirits," who "knew him," bore to the Messiah? In all such cases, errors of fact are errors of faith. And the more a religion has an historical character, whose very creed receives definite facts in the past and predictions for the future, the less can it claim the immunities of a purely spiritual belief, and the deeper its stake in every critical revision and reproduction of antiquity.

In fine, no mechanical separation,—of subject, of time, of author,—can part the Divine from the human in any Scripture; but only that living Spirit of God which is in our hearts as in the hearts of old, and which, in all ages, is ready to know its own. We may spare ourselves the artifice of picking out, with rose-coloured illumination, every verse containing the name of God. The religious thought, like the social and the scientific, glows and darkens of itself, from writer to writer, from age to age. Taken as the varying expression of the human soul, attempting to consecrate life with diviner meanings, it is everywhere full of pathetic interest. Assumed as the invariable oracle of Supreme truth, it can never cease to harass the pure with doubt, and harden the heart of the willing believer.

As with the idea of God in the Old Testament, so is it with the doctrine of Christ's person in the New. The question is still the same: whether, in the predicates assigned to him, we have infallible information from those who divinely know, or the fallible conception of those who humanly think. Such a *theory* as the Incarnation might, by a well-known process of retrospective reverence, gather

itself around an historical figure simply human. Such a *fact* as the Incarnation, viz., that a seeming man, born, suffering, dying, was really Infinite God, incapable of birth, suffering, death, could never be assured to us but by those who are admitted behind the scene of the finite world. Mere witnesses, few or many, are useless here: they can tell us only what they have seen and heard: and this is a thing neither visible nor audible, and traceable by no characteristic and exclusive signs. Unless therefore, those who affirm it can make good a claim to know what humanly is unknowable, their doctrine must be left to its place among the historical developments of religious faith. We are not aware of any reason for attributing to the authors and editors of the New Testament books a special competency to speak infallibly of things beyond the finite world. It is as "*witnesses*" that the apostles themselves demand attention. It is as a *critic and compiler* of historical materials that St. Luke conciliates attention to his narratives. It is as a *reasoner* on the data of the national life and literature, and the cross and resurrection of Christ, that St. Paul appeals to the intellect and affections of his converts. And, on the other hand, we see every trace that could be expected of a purely natural and fallible speculation respecting the person of Christ, mingling itself everywhere with the record of what he said and did, and with the discussion of Church questions in each epistle. To a very few of these indications we must refer.

I. No fewer than three distinct doctrines, evidently successive in their formation, appear in the Gospels, respecting the person of Jesus. The question, at once perplexing and fascinating to the disciples looking back upon his life,—how and when did the Divine element which dwelt in him unite itself with the human,—was susceptible of various answers; and receiving at first the simplest and most obvious, was gradually strained to higher and more recondite solutions. According to the oldest of the three doctrines, it was at the baptism of Jesus that the

Spirit came and rested upon him and set him apart for his sacred work: and under the influence of this view was originally written the account embodied in our Gospels,—of the descent of the dove;—an account curiously varied in the Gospel of the Hebrews by the statement that the dove not simply alighted on him, but went into him. This incident loses all its significance, unless Jesus, up to that date, be conceived as undistinguished from other men. If his very personality had all along carried its Divine elements within it, what room could there be for an *investiture* with powers already there? We have here then the memorial of a time when the story of the miraculous birth was yet unknown, and the belief, which long lingered among the Ebionites, in the simple humanity of Christ, determined the form of Christian tradition. This is rendered more strikingly evident by the words which, in the Gospel of the Hebrews, and in one manuscript of Luke, are attributed to the Divine voice at the baptism—"Thou art my Son, *this day have I begotten thee*,"—words which express in the clearest way that the *Sonship* was not prior to the public ministry. Another vestige of the same stage of opinion remains in the two genealogies of Jesus, both of which give the pedigree of *Joseph*, and betray a time when his parental relation to Jesus was not superseded by the progress of doctrine. That the Apostle Paul shared the belief of that time is evident from his speaking of Jesus as "born of the *seed of David according to the flesh*"; though the next words, "declared to be the Son of God with power *by resurrection from the dead*," reckon the Sonship from a different date,—from the beginning, namely, not of the earthly ministry, but of the heavenly life.

Soon, however, the Christian imagination, especially in circles less familiar with the figurative use by the Hebrews of the Fatherhood of God, began to see something more than a spiritual meaning in the phrase—"Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee" (Ps. ii. 7); a phrase which had long been misapplied to the Messiah. One to

whom such words could be applied must surely, if they were to have the right meaning, be differenced from other men in his origin as well as his latter attributes: the sacred distinction must belong to his very nature, and not have been externally superinduced; and from his very birth-hour the mark must have been upon him of a consecrated and superhuman life. The natural impulse to look for premonitions of greatness in persons who have become centres of reverence would, in this case, work all the more effectually, because directed, at the interval of two generations, on the darkness of a village household, a darkness in itself impenetrable and visible only through the haze of a later glory. In the absence of a clue of history, the only resource was the clue of prophecy, and the analogies of sacred tradition: and under guidance of these, the faith and fancy of the Christians were led to the story of the Birth and Infancy, of which two versions appear in the first and third Gospels. The new and literal turn thus given to the verse, "Thou art my Son, &c.," rendered it no longer appropriate at the baptism; and it disappeared from the narrative of that event, being first accompanied (as in the Gospel of the Hebrews), and then replaced (as in Matthew) by the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

If the fourth Gospel were really by the Apostle John, and if the mother of Jesus were an inmate of his home, we should certainly expect that he, above all the evangelists, would dwell upon the marvels of Mary's year of espousal, and all the signs which she had so "pondered in her heart"; availing himself of his special means of information, to clear up,—as became a supplementary and correcting hand,—the unmanageable contradictions between Matthew and Luke. Instead of this, the Gospel called after him not only is silent respecting the *incunabula* of the Master's life, never even mentioning his mother's name, but is imbued throughout with a conception of his person, quite uncongenial with the narratives of the infancy, and belonging to a wholly different school of thought. Was he born of the

Virgin Mary by the overshadowing power of the Most High? This indeed made his nature *more* than human; but gave it no conscious existence *earlier* than the human life: he was a new being, who, with a higher constitution than others, entered on his first experiences in this world, and was placed here as the agent of a Divine crisis. To the authors of Matthew's and Luke's introductory chapters, he, no less than ordinary men, was a fresh creation on his appearance here. Of anything antecedent, which he exchanged for this life, there is not the faintest hint: it is his formation in the womb on which all the light of description is thrown, without a suspicion of anything anterior but darkness and negation. On the other hand, it is precisely in this prior world that the fourth Gospel delights to contemplate him; transferring him thence into the conditions and the scenes of humanity, but leaving the mode and time of transition behind the veil. The whole drama of this Gospel is so framed as to exhibit, beneath the disguise which Jewish unbelief could not penetrate, the Divine and pre-existent Logos moving about for awhile in kindred with the sorrows of men, and traced by rays of light and life escaping from beneath his mortal robe as he passes on. His miracles are here, more than elsewhere, an efflux of himself; his discourses, lingering little with the simple and tender humanities, are mystic outpourings of his transcendent nature; his submission to death, even his emergence again into life, is his own act; the one taking occasion of the wickedness of men, the other of the purpose of God; but both, expressions of his life-giving and life-holding essence.

No apprehensive reader, we think, can fail to recognize these three views of the person of Jesus; and no one who reflects upon them in their mutual relations can doubt their successive origin, and radical inconsistency. The first two, it is true, appear in combination twice over, on the pages of one and the same Evangelist. But this only shows, like many another symptom, that our synoptical Gospels did not assume their present form till that great fusion of

elements and tendencies had begun to operate, out of which, at the expense of so many significant traditions and distinctive beliefs, the level unity of the Catholic Church was at last spread. We know that, of the first and second form of doctrine, all the constituents and the predisposing causes existed within the immediate circle of the primitive disciples, and were ready to crystallize around an accepted Messianic figure. And the third, which furnishes the main predicate of Christ's Divine nature, is a well-ascertained product of that Logos-philosophy which in Alexandria had brought Jew and Greek into the same intellectual school, and prepared them to meet in the same spiritual church. The fundamental conceptions, the characteristic formulas, the phrases floating between abstractions and hypostases, which distinguish the fourth Gospel, were already teeming in the speculative atmosphere three generations before we have any trace of the Gospel itself. They are found in the treatises of Philo, suspended there in a kind of metaphysical solution, diffused and wavering, but ready to be precipitated on any point of historical attraction. The Gospel does but appropriate to the person of Christ the floating vesture, half cloud, half light, of a pre-existent theosophy. Finding, therefore, these differences of doctrine, and finding them also follow the movements and law of human opinion, we must look on the writings that contain them as the historical product and record, not as the authoritative source, of Christian faith.

II. This inference is confirmed when we test the infallibility claimed for the sacred writers in a field more open to our knowledge than the exceptional attributes of Christ's person. The Archbishop of Canterbury thinks it wicked to doubt that a superintending inspiration preserved these writers absolutely free from error. Indeed? Does he never read a lesson about casting out a devil? And is the doctrine of exorcism true or false? If true, why has the practical application of it passed from a piety to an imposture? If "the devils" are realities, or if they were so

when coming out of Mary Magdalen and when entering the swine, if their superhuman instinct detected the Christ and burst into a testimony on which an infallible evangelist could rest his case, how is it that from modern books of Evidences this argument has vanished, and no Bishop Sherlock, in any "trial of the witnesses," ever puts the devils in the box? And if the doctrine be false, must we not own that an error, which now holds no dignified place among human superstitions, was twined into the very substance of the evangelists' faith? And what is to be said of the expectation, expressed in more or less distinct form by every one of the New Testament writers, and evidently supplying a prominent topic to the apostolic preaching, that the then living generation would see the descent of Christ from Heaven to end the historic world? We will not press this point so far as to say that the mistaken faith in question constituted the very Gospel of the first age, and that all else was but accessory, a mere atmosphere of spiritual theory around this solid nucleus of certainty supposed to be revealed. But, taken at its lowest measure, the fact is surely enough to show that Apostles and Evangelists were not protected from the liabilities of all human faculty, and could err not less about the issue than about the evidence of their Master's mission to the world.

III. Nor is the proof of fallibility limited to the sphere of ideal beliefs: it extends, as every critical reader is aware, to the region of historical fact. Unless the testimony of Josephus is to be used only to confirm and never to correct the evangelists, unless, that is, they are to enjoy an immunity from all scrutiny, we cannot shut our eyes to the presence of palpable mistakes in their narrative,—mistakes which, on the same evidence, would be at once admitted in the case of any other record. The instances are so familiar to every theologian that, but for the pertinacious disregard of them by bishops who can only scold at their logical results, it would be insufferably elementary to adduce them. Luke, in order to bring Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem for the

Nativity, finds an occasion in the census of Judæa made by Quirinus, Roman Governor of Syria; assuming that the decree would oblige Joseph to report himself and his family not at his place of residence, but at his ancestral town. Quirinus, however, did not become Governor of Syria before the year 5 (A.D.), and the Census did not take place till two years later, when, on the banishment of Archelaus, Judæa became a Roman province, and it devolved on the neighbouring governor to take the needful steps for its incorporation with the empire. Jesus therefore must, in any case, have been above six years old at the conjuncture provided for his birthday, and still older by two or three years, if, as Matthew declares, his early infancy fell in the time of Herod, the father of Archelaus. To the same date, of the Census, Luke, through the lips of Gamaliel (Acts v. 37), correctly refers the insurrection of Judas the Gaulonite; but prior to that disturbance he places another, under Theudas, which in reality followed it at an interval of some thirty years, and was still ten years in the future at the moment when Gamaliel is made to speak of it as past. If it be objected that in these instances we only prove the Evangelists at variance with Josephus, himself not unimpeachable, we are reminded of their many and serious differences from one another; serious, that is, as bearing on the claim to a supernatural trustworthiness, though not as impairing the main outline of the history. No mosaic work of the most skilful harmonist can piece together into a consistent picture, for example, the two narratives of the infancy. In the first, Bethlehem is the permanent abode of Joseph and Mary: and it needed a Divine warning to prevent their return thither out of Egypt after Herod's death, and induce their removal to Galilee. In the second, their original and only home is at Nazareth, whence they simply visit Bethlehem on the business of the Census; and whither they come back in six weeks, after presenting the child at Jerusalem. Within this short interval of absence from Galilee, if Matthew's incidents

are to be provided for, room must be found for the journey and visit of the Magi (occasioned by a birth-star nearly two years before), their return by another route, the flight into Egypt, the massacre of the Innocents, the residence in exile till Herod's death, and the removal then into the Northern province of the Holy Land. If, repelled by the absurdity of this, we insert the Egyptian episode between the presentation in the temple and the settlement in Nazareth, we contradict Luke (ii. 39) in express terms; we assume that the angel, whose business it was to warn the holy family against Herod, would let them go to Jerusalem within immediate reach of the lion's spring; and we suppose that the King, instead of seizing his opportunity when the child's presence on the spot was publicly proclaimed "to all those in Jerusalem who were looking for redemption," resorted to a gratuitous hit or miss murder of the Bethlehem children collectively.

If these phenomena were limited to the introductory chapters, we might try to escape their force by surrendering the tale of the infancy, as a mere preface, to the contingencies of uninspired history. The events lay thirty years and more out of the first disciples' experience; and the guarantee of infallibility, it might be thought, would not perhaps go further back than their own personal call and inspiration. The end of the gospel narrative however exhibits, in its different versions, variances scarcely less conspicuous than the beginning. Were it not for the mood of sacred indolence in which the Scriptures are read,—a mood which spiritually feels the deeper touches one by one, but intellectually grasps and paints nothing as a whole,—no one could be insensible to the contrast between the fourth Gospel and the synoptics in their account of the last days of Christ; or could fail, if once awakened to it, to be more impressed by it, the more he studied the subterfuges for escaping it. There is a last meal of Jesus with his Apostles described with much detail by all the Evangelists. That they were all engaged in drawing the picture of one

and the same occasion, so that we cannot make two successive evenings out of it, is evident from certain common features incapable of repetition. Both in the synoptics and in the remaining Gospel Jesus that night predicts Peter's denial of him, "ere the cock crow" (Matt. xxvi. 34, John xiii. 38): in both occurs the betrayal by Judas (Matt. xxvi. 24, 25; John xiii. 21–30): in both, when the band round the table breaks up, the move is made at once to the scene of the betrayal in the garden. Yet, this meal is declared by the synoptics, with particular solemnity of preparation, to be the Jewish passover, which Jesus earnestly desired to keep with his disciples before he suffered: while by John, it is, with equal emphasis, shown to be *not* the passover, but an ordinary meal a day before. Luke, for instance (xxii. 8), represents Jesus as himself setting on foot the arrangements for holding the passover, sending Peter and John to see to their execution, and (15) explaining, as he took his place at table, how intent he had been on accomplishing this last celebration of the ancient rite. That this eagerness did not, as some have conjectured, induce him to anticipate by a day the proper date of the passover is evident from the direct statement (Matt. xxvi. 17, Mark xiv. 12, Luke xxii. 7) that it was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, *when the passover must be killed.* In John, on the other hand, the observance of the rite was still future at the hour of their supper: for the words of Jesus to Judas, "What thou doest, do quickly," were construed by the hearers into an order to buy what was needful for the feast (xiii. 29): and the whole proceedings of the next fatal day, the place of the Jews at the trial (xviii. 28), the time of the condemnation (xix. 14), the quick removal from the Cross (xix. 31), were affected by the fact that the paschal lamb was to be slain in the coming afternoon. The stress which the writer lays upon his own exceptional chronology of the crucifixion is brought at once to its extremity and its explanation in his account of the measures taken to hasten death: the soldiers went

round to break the legs of the three sufferers; but by a special providential adjustment Jesus escaped this treatment, receiving a spear-thrust instead: on which the author fixed a two-fold meaning; the emblematic blood and water (prototype of the mixed wine of the Lord's Supper) was drawn from Jesus' side; and by "not a bone of him being broken" he was declared to be the true paschal lamb (Exod. xii. 46),—whose "flesh" (John vi. 53–58),—"the bread of life" (vi. 35),—was eaten at the Lord's Supper. To bring out this meaning, announced by the author with the utmost solemnity (xix. 35–37), it was essential that the death on the Cross should coincide with the paschal celebration, and, for the disciples, should supersede it; and that while the Jews, still in their blindness, were engaged in fulfilling the letter of the old typical feast, all its significance should be absorbed and lost in the simultaneous realization of the supreme passover,—the slaying (by their own unsuspecting hands) of the very "Lamb of God." The contradiction therefore between this Gospel and the synoptics is no removable semblance, no accident from different treatment of the same historical materials; but expresses a radical contrast of doctrinal conception: and, even if it could be chafed away and put out of sight by help of conjecture and adjustment, the process, in saving each narrative from external collision, would sacrifice the inner meaning of them all.

The features which we have now pointed out in the Christian records, viz.;—different and successive stages of doctrine as to the Person of Christ,—errors of belief in regard to both the evidences and the issue of his mission,—mistakes of fact and mutual contradictions in the story of his life, deepen in many respects, instead of destroying, their interest as historical memorials; but are utterly subversive of the claim set up on their behalf, to be regarded as infallible witnesses of events and guides in faith. In particular, their authority appears quite unequal to the task of establishing such a doctrine as the Incar-

nation: even where they affirm it,—as one among several views of their Master's nature,—no reason can be shown for raising the statement from the rank of a human idea to that of a Divine Revelation. The only question is, whether perhaps the doctrine may dispense with supernatural testimony on their part, and come within the legitimate range of ordinary historical proof; whether it can be left to rest on the exceptional facts of Jesus' life and his own words, reported to us as they are by early human, though not Divine, attestation. No portion of the life can be held available for this purpose, unless it be the prefatory passages of the birth and infancy: and we have seen how little we can depend on these anonymous, inconsistent, and unhistorical legends. And the relevant words of Christ respecting himself are chiefly found in the fourth Gospel, where he is made to hold a language totally unlike any ascribed to him elsewhere, and perfectly like the reflections of the Evangelist himself. Could it be shown that we have here a faithful report of his discourses, it would no longer remain doubtful that he claimed a pre-existent Divine nature, though the claim would still be liable to his own canon, "If I bear witness of myself, my testimony is not true" (*i.e.*, adequate); and the aspect presented by his character would be materially affected. But, though it may be long before theological feeling relaxes its passionate embrace of this Gospel, and it will always retain an extraordinary interest as illustrating the early development of special Christian ideas, yet the struggle against the inexorable patience of the historical critic must, we are convinced, in the end be vain; and the book will be tried, not by the inapplicable rules of authentic narrative, but as a reflection of retrospective sentiment and faith in the second century. The other Gospels, it is true, are not without expressions here and there which accord with the Johannine claim of a higher nature; and M. Guizot (69) very pertinently appeals to one, which is attributed to Jesus by both Matthew (xi. 27) and Luke (x. 22): "All things are

delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." From such passages, however, the dogmatic theologian and the historical critic reason in opposite directions. The former, assuming the originality and trustworthiness of the record, wins from them the authority of Christ himself for the high doctrine of his person; the latter, believing it a well-established fact that this type of doctrine grew up only with increasing distance from his real life, sees in them the marks of a later and an unauthentic tradition. Between the rival probabilities of these two arguments we find it impossible to hesitate. Amid the obscurity that yet hangs over the origin of our first three Gospels, one point has become perfectly clear; that each, instead of being a first hand and homogeneous production, has been formed by accretion of materials differing in value and successive in time; so that mingled in the same narrative with pure and faithful memorials of Jesus are many traditions vitiated by the ecclesiastical or polemic feeling of a later generation. The commission of "the keys," for instance, betrays an age when there was talk of apostolic authority and church power, and speaks in another tone than the voice which said, "It shall not be so among you; but whosoever would be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever would be chief among you, let him be your servant." The parting injunction also (Matt. xxviii. 19): "Go ye, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," indicates both in its substance and its form the latest style of evangelical tradition; for how, in the face of this command, had it really been given, could the original Apostles, to whom it was addressed, have limited their labours "to the circumcision" (Gal. ii. 9), and strenuously withstood the reception of Gentiles on simple baptism? And who does not recognize, in the Trinitarian formula of baptism, the set dialect of the

later Church, far removed from the primitive simplicity of Christ? In these instances, the presence in the Gospels of unhistorical elements worked in by successive collectors and editors is no longer a serious question, and however difficult it may be to trace the operation of similar causes through the record, the attempt is steadily approximating to fixed results; and among the passages charged, with the least hesitation, on post-apostolic invention, is the very verse to which M. Guizot appeals. Strauss remarks upon it thus :—

"When Jesus on one occasion addresses himself to God as Father and Lord of heaven and earth, in thanks that He has withheld the apprehension of his doctrine from the wise and prudent, and granted it to babes (Matt. xi. 25, *seq.* Luke x. 21, *seq.*), he seems so far to take his stand only on the common ground on which every good man is justified in addressing God as Father. But when he continues (27), 'All these things are delivered unto me of my Father, and no man knoweth the Son but the Father, nor any the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him,' we are here carried into a quite exceptional relation, in which the speaker of such words is conscious of standing towards God. It is the same as when the Johannine Jesus says to the Father, 'All mine is thine, and thine is mine" (xvii. 6–10); and again, 'The Father knoweth me, and I know the Father' (x. 15). In the fourth Gospel expressions of this sort have a base of support in what is there said of the higher nature of Jesus: God, who has sent his personal Creative Word under human form into the world, has not only specially delivered mankind to his guardianship, but inasmuch as without him comes to pass nothing that comes to pass (i. 3), he has, universally, everything in common with God. For this very reason, however, we can make nothing historical of these sayings of Christ in the fourth Gospel. A Jesus who can utter such things of himself is no object of historical treatment. In the first three Gospels, the sentence we have quoted finds no such supporting ground: in them, Jesus may be a man begotten of the Holy Spirit; but he is no Incarnate Creative Word: and it is not till after the Resurrection that all power is given to him in heaven and earth (Matt. xxviii. 18). We are driven therefore to inquire, whether that sentence in Matthew and Luke admits of interpretation on the broad

ground of the universal filial relation of men to God. 'And we can very well imagine how Jesus, in whom an apprehension of God as Father had dawned, amid a people knowing him only as Lord, and themselves his servitors,—had dawned moreover in virtue of a temperament of spirit removing all variance between the self-consciousness and the consciousness of God, —might be assured of an altogether special relation to God: he might be conscious that no one but he knew God aright, *i.e.*, as Father; with all others this knowledge was at least secondary, imparted from him. But why, then, does he add, 'Nor knoweth any one the Son, save the Father?' Was, then, the Son, *i.e.*, Jesus himself, a being so mysterious, that only God could know him? Not so, if he was a man, but only if in some way he was a superhuman being; so that this sentence, which stands quite insulated in the first and third Gospels, indicates a fundamental conception similar to that of the fourth Gospel, and has, therefore, the appearance of an addition made with a view to raise the representation of Jesus a step further beyond the simply human than we elsewhere find it in those Gospels." Pp. 203-4.

When these incrustations on the original picture are cleared from the canvas, the dress of mythological pretension, the attitude of self-glorification, which are nowhere less at home than in the divinest nature, will disappear; and the figure will come out, grand in its simplicity, of the true Son of Man, standing in the light of a new consciousness that just for that very reason he is also Son of God, and must draw others to be so too. The Incarnation, taken in the Church sense, as predicable exclusively of his personality, is not only, as we have shown, unsustained by proof, supernatural or natural, but an absolute reversal of the animating principle of his life and faith. The Church makes it the most stupendous of miracles that he individually was at once human and divine: to him it was the every-day fact that all men are mingled of human and divine. The Church sets the two natures in such contrariety that the rules of the universe must be set aside to blend them in a single instance: to him it was revealed,—

and the revelation bathed the world in a sanctity constant as the daylight,—that they were in the closest kindred, living together, whether the consciousness was mutual or not, in every soul, and incapable, without sorrowful breach and unfulfilled perfection, of parting from one another. To set him up on a pedestal alone,—the unique form in which God's essence has entered the limits of our humanity,—is to frustrate the very aim and prayer of his life, by appropriating to him the consecration for which he cared only so far as it was universal. Not till we say of all men what the creed says of him exclusively, that two natures go to make one person, both that which is born after its kind, and that which is "of one substance with the Father,"—the blended conditions of the *creature* and the *Son* of God,—do we make any confession which he would own: and the truth of the Incarnation first comes out, when, in virtue of it, he represents us all, and by exhibiting it on the level of our life, makes us aware that our humanity is not human only, but, beyond the sphere of self, has fellowship and rest in God. The speciality in him lay in his unique consciousness and revelation of this universal fact: opening up, as a personal relation between the Divine and the human spirits, experiences and suggestions of the conscience which had indeed come upon the stage, but had spoken in no living tones before. All the deepest things of our life and love, once dryly referred to Nature, he construed into God. Objectively, the world is ruled, and men are constituted, just as they were before he came: there was no less a holy guest in their hearts, of old, than now. But the disguise is gone, through which we "wist not *Who* it was:" and this discovery,—this conversion of many impersonal into one personal relation,—transforms the whole aspect of life.

For a moment, but for a moment only, M. Guizot seems to escape from the Church limits into a wider view of "the Incarnation" as a general human fact:

"What is man himself," he says, "but an incomplete and im-

perfect incarnation of God? The materialists who deny the soul, and the materialists who deny creation, are alone consistent in rejecting the Christian dogma. All who believe in the distinction between spirit and matter, who do not believe that man is the result of the fermentation of matter, or of the transformation of species, are constrained to admit the presence in human nature of the Divine element, and they must necessarily accept these words in Genesis,—'God created man in his own image;' that is to say, they must acknowledge the presence of God in frail and fallible humanity."—Pp. 72, 73.

If "the Christian dogma" regards Christ as only a fuller example of the Divine Incarnation which is incomplete in other men, it brings him into analogy, not into contrast, with them, and makes him of their kin on the side of his higher nature, as well as in his humiliation and suffering. But what then does his pre-existent Godhead mean? And why for his physical birth must he have only a mother? These marvels are intended as marks of his higher nature; and they are the negation, instead of the affirmation of humanity, and leave nothing of him for us except his limitations and his mortality. The fact is, M. Guizot, in glancing at this analogy, touches on what the Church doctrine *ought to mean*, rather than on what it *does* mean. He hints at the general truth of which this is the mythology. But the mythology, intent on glorifying an individual being, insulates him, and cuts off all approach to the general truth; it stows away into a particular human biography the Incarnation which, it is truly said, belongs to universal history.

Among certain disciples of Mr. Maurice a mode of speech is current, which, used as it is by thoughtful men, must have some reasonable meaning, but which, again and again, we have vainly sought to interpret. "To the Incarnation," they say, "we cling as the truth of truths, the very essence of Christianity, and indeed of all religion. Not, however, that we care much about *the historical Incarnation.* This we could permit the critic to approach; but the central reality is sacred to us, and we can sympathize with no doubt

upon it." Can any one explain this distinction? Can he lay out clearly before his thought the two terms of its antithesis? What incarnation other than "*historical*" is there to believe in? and *that* of so much higher a kind as to be an indispensable object, while this is a separable accident, of faith? "Incarnation," is simply, "God in our humanity;" it must be somewhere, and somewhen, in one man, in some men, or in all men; and in any case it must be "historical," manifesting itself in some definite phenomena of life, thought, and character, in an individual, in societies, or in the race. We might say indeed that the Divine element, if concentrated in a single person, belongs in its action rather to biography; if continuous through the experiences of a people, to history; if pervading the development of mankind, to the sphere of philosophical theology; inasmuch as universal facts, which repeat themselves in us all, and have place among the constant conditions of our existence, are usually surrendered by the historian to the cognizance of the philosopher. If we try the enigma with this key, those who propound it mean to say, "We attach extreme importance to the faith in a Divine and everlasting guide, present in the human soul: provided this is saved, we feel comparatively indifferent to the question about the person of Jesus Christ in particular, whether or not it was exceptionally constituted; and about the supernatural direction given to the Jews, whether or not it was exclusive and unique in kind." Here we have an intelligible position, which really does, in our view, reserve the pure and spiritual essence of the religion of Christ, while surrendering its traditional forms to the remodelling hand of the scholar and historian; and which, in treating the Christian Incarnation, not as an isolated subject of wonder, but as the signal representation and disclosure of a solemn fact in our humanity, seizes all its permanent significance. We should be glad to believe that we had hit the right sense of the dictum we have cited. The attitude towards the modern historical critics assumed by the school whence

it proceeds hardly permits us to think so. But other meaning we cannot find.

On the other dogmas, which assemble themselves as mere satellites around the Incarnation, little need be said. Applying to them a similar treatment, M. Guizot translates them into general moral truths which they were never meant to express, and silently drops the more questionable elements of biblical legend and church mythology, which they involve, "Original Sin," for instance, is taken to signify that moral deterioration which is entailed upon the present by all past guilt; which, from generation to generation, makes the sins of the father bequeath an infirmity of character on the children. In this sense, the doctrine would certainly embody a profound and solemn truth,—a truth, however, which no scepticism, so far as we remember, has ever called in question, and which certainly Coleridge, with those who joined in his protest against birth-sin, would be the last to deny. No rationalist would object to the propositions that (the legend in Genesis being assured) Adam, after having disobeyed, had a feebler power of resistance; and that, in proportion as he allowed himself in a habit of wrong-doing, his children might exhibit a lower moral type. It is not till the theologian oversteps these common-places that reason and conscience begin to revolt; when he affirms, not a cumulative deterioration proportioned to the antecedent unfaithfulness, but a uniform and universal corruption of a whole race, entailed by a single transgression at the outset; and when he further pronounces this inherited taint,—involving in each case only the "sin of being born,"—"to deserve God's wrath and damnation." This exaggeration of the first lapse makes, in fact, all subsequent sins insignificant by eclipse, or even impossible, by killing out in the poisoned nature the very conditions of responsibility; and, in its presence, M. Guizot's lesson of the infection and transmission of our personal immoralities is absolutely lost; just as in the city of the plague, secondary diseases vanish, and it would be

trifling to hold forth on the contagion of chickenpox and mumps. You must get rid of "original sin," or you will never heartily acknowledge any other.

The dogma of Redemption is less explained away by M. Guizot; and is proportionately less successfully removed from the protest of the Moral Sense. It is perhaps natural that the venerable historian of civilization should appeal to the analogies of other religions for suffrages in favour of his own: and when, on behalf of the doctrine of vicarious penalty, he pleads its presence in every sacrificial rite, in every heroic self-immolation to avert the curse of heaven from an army or a people, it cannot be denied that the resemblances are real and wide which encircle the Church dogma; and that if it is content in the society of such kindred, it may win from them suffrages enough. But it is difficult to distinguish between such defence of the doctrine, and the usual attacks upon it. What more can be charged against it than that it is heathenish in its conception,—a construction put upon the death of Jesus by minds prepossessed with the theory of propitiation by victims, in an age still haunted by the worship of fear? No wonder that it is in harmony with the usages and impulses of inferior religions, if it is itself an example of them, generated by the same fictions of superstition. The real question remains behind: Whether it is consistent with Infinite Moral Perfection to be propitiated for guilt by the sufferings of innocence;—a question on which it is astounding that any one familiar with the alphabet of right and wrong can for an instant pause. What is the natural verdict of untheological justice may be seen from an illustrative parallel, which perhaps may have met the eye of our readers. We take it from the letter of the New York correspondent, published in the *Times* of Thursday, October the 20th:

"The case occurred some time ago at Palmyra, where General M'Neil had his head-quarters. A Unionist, for whom the general had some special regard, was reported to have been shot by guerillas. M'Neil forthwith ordered ten suspected

inhabitants of the town, reported rightfully or wrongfully to be in league with the guerillas, to be publicly shot in retaliation. One of them was an elderly man, with a devotedly-attached wife and a large family of children, the youngest but three years old. A youthful unmarried man, named Sydnor, a resident of Palmyra, was struck with sudden sympathy for the sad fate of the husband and father, and in a fit of generous impulse, which, had it been recorded in the page of ancient history, would have rendered his name immortal, offered his life to General M'Neil, as a substitute for that of his older fellow-countryman. M'Neil, without a spark of manly or Christian feeling in his heart, had the ineffable brutality to accept the offer. The old man was released, protesting against the bargain, and the young man was atrociously murdered in his stead."

Yet there are people, we suppose, who accept their "salvation" on similar terms, without "protesting against the bargain," and have no objection to live in a universe governed by an Almighty M'Neil.

The real and only truths into which the doctrine of Redemption might be construed are,—that in a world of infinite mutual dependencies,—a "City of God,"—where the unity is not in each but in all,—self-sacrifice is the appointed way from the human life to the Divine; and that, while we vainly try, by an act of will, to break our inner bonds, inspire ourselves, and earn our heaven, a free surrender of reverence and faith to a holy object, and a simple trust in the love of God, will take us out of our own hands, and change us into new creatures. But these truths, deeply as they tincture the Pauline Epistles, are found in no theory of propitiation, and are only darkened by the defence of sacrificial superstitions.

The weakness of M. Guizot's apology for the orthodox scheme of dogma is so remarkable as to awaken at times an involuntary suspicion of its entire genuineness. Not that we for a moment imagine him to be consciously playing a part. But it is not uncommon for minds trained in a well-compacted system to take for granted that it all hangs

together, and to cling to parts of it which are little defensible and feebly held, for the sake of other elements which speak to far profounder convictions. The real and ultimate earnestness of the author is probably reserved for the great primary truths of a personal God and of human responsibility and immortality, the loss of which turns religion into a chill poetic mist, and gives to life that air of desolation, which is so marked in the dedications addressed by both Strauss and Renan to departed relatives. In the case of both these writers, and, it must be owned, of the great schools in which they have studied, free historical criticism has appeared in connection with a far deeper philosophical scepticism; and the same dissolving process by which the artificial compounds of Church dogmas have disappeared, has been applied to reduce the primitive elements of all Theistic faith. It is undeniable, and for the interests of sound theological learning it is deplorable, that a pantheistic philosophy has furnished the premisses for the leading conclusions of the newer continental criticism; and the earlier writings of F. C. Baur especially, give colour to the charge that history was not impartially studied, but prejudged and forced into the compartments of a speculative programme. Where a preconceived system of immanent life and necessary development requires the removal of miracle and the explanation of human experiences without personal Divine causation, it is pardonable if opponents doubt the patience, and distrust the ingenious combinations, of the professed explorer of the past, and prefer an easy attack on his questionable principles to laborious scrutiny of his intermediate reasonings and his ultimate results. Such a method of reply, however, is illogical and unsafe. The removal of a pantheistic philosophy will not reinstate all the beliefs which it has assailed: nor is it needful to defend them in order to confute it. Church dogmas and biblical legends may be false for more reasons than one: and it does not follow that because a bad reason has been given for rejecting them, no good one remains; or that, to get rid

of the bad one, you must make yourself responsible for their truth. Even in Baur and Strauss, the original speculative impulse soon worked itself out, and no finer models of pure historical research and critical judgment can be found in recent literature, than are afforded in the later works of the former and the new *Leben Jesu* of the latter. Without surrendering their own philosophy, both writers reason out their conclusions on independent grounds that tell alike on readers who with ourselves utterly dissent from it, and on those of their own school. It is time that the separation which they have made between their criticism and their metaphysics should be made also by their opponents, and that every one who owns obligation to their researches in the early Christianity should cease to be threatened with their theory of the universe. With the great principles of M. Guizot's philosophy, his faith in human freedom and responsibility, in a living relation between the spirit of man and God, in a Personal Moral rule over the world, in a higher life, where the presages of conscience and pure affection will be fulfilled, we are in profound accord: and so far as Scripture and the Church assume and convey these imperishable truths, their authority will be independent of their external history, and will speak for itself to the hearts and reason of mankind. But that authority depends on the intrinsic purity and spiritual depth of the lessons it is used to enforce; and is imperilled by nothing so much as the attempt to pledge it on behalf of withered theologies and legendary incredibilities by which no man can live in the open air of this century. No authority, no miracle, no "Thus saith the Lord," can turn evil into good, or falsehood into truth: that which has a footing in reality can make itself known without letter of introduction; and that which has none can maintain itself by no credentials. Dr. Newman, as we have said, condescends to the argument,—that the only alternative is, Catholic or Atheist. Yet his own experiences, recorded by himself, plainly contradict the statement. On the one

hand, from early life he has found himself compelled to "rest in the thought of two, and two only, supreme and luminously self-evident beings—myself and my Creator" (pp. 59, 323). On the other hand, he says—

"Starting with the being of a God, I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth, of which my whole being is so full, and the effect upon me is, in consequence, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself" (p. 377).

Thus, the inner and the outer witness are at variance: he believes at home: he disbelieves abroad. But here, it is plain, there is no real equipoise of testimony; for on the affirmative side, there is a "supreme and luminous *self-evidence;*" on the negative, only a seeming disorder among secondary phenomena, from which, at most, nothing but a probable *inference* could be drawn: the conviction from the first is as irremovable as that self-consciousness against which argument is vain; while the second affords a mere reasoning from visible effects to invisible causes, and depends, moreover, chiefly on the *absence* of expected indications. Instead of presenting a logical balance, waiting for the casting vote of an infallible Church, the problem is already decided on its own merits, so far as immediate, positive, "supreme" certainty cannot be met by mediate, negative, subordinate probability. Were there then no Catholic Church at all, it could still never be doubtful, whether we were to carry inwards the confusing impression of the world, and permit it to darken and extinguish, if possible, the "luminous" sense of a Divine and guiding Presence, or whether we were to take this light of intuitive faith out into the world, and by means of it bring the tangled look of things into some clearness and beauty. Did we even depend on the verdict of some outward authoritative voice, we cannot say that the ecclesiastical solution would help us much; a "fallen"

world, which has been in ruin and has failed of realizing its idea ever since it was made, seems not greatly preferable to one that never had an idea. There is however a Catholicism which does afford a genuine support to the inner intimations of the private soul: that discovery of sympathetic convictions in other minds, that broad consensus of religious humanity, which turns the lonely hymn into a solemn chorus, and which, through future ages as through the past, will continue to consecrate the struggle of life by faith and prayer.

XIII.

THE NEW AFFINITIES OF FAITH.

A PLEA FOR FREE CHRISTIAN UNION.

FOREIGNERS have often complained of the intricacy of English religious phenomena. The present age is eliciting from the confusion two conspicuous features: a return of Sacerdotal usage, and the erection of an ideal of secular good into a systematic faith. The first is seen not merely in the recovered vigour of Romanism, but in the ritual and monastic movement within the Anglican Church; for, however many may be drawn into this by æsthetic sentiment and the charm of sacred symbolism, it has no ultimate meaning or defence except in the doctrine of sacramental and priestly mediation. The second is seen in the denial or despair of religious truth which characterizes the scientific temper of the day, as well as in the humanistic philosophy which aims to perfect life and society with omission of their Divine relations. These two powers are undeniably burning away the Protestantism of England at its opposite ends; the one attacking dependent and susceptible minds among the educated classes, and kindling them with a new fire of devotion and self-sacrifice; the other taking hold of the independent and dissatisfied artizan, and wrapping him in dreams of physical well-being. Did we look at the progress of these two forces alone, we might fancy our world surrendered to the alternative so often threatened, "*Rome, or Atheism.*"

But between these extremes lies the main substance and life of English society, including an immense mass of religious character and sentiment, which has affinity with neither of them. It needs the faith of a Manning or a Comte to believe that the Scotland of Knox, and the England of Cranmer and the Puritans, can either reverse three centuries of their history, or recant the whole of their religion. Take them collectively, their future development of thought will be not away from the direction of their past genius, but out of it, carrying them into ulterior applications of principles which it is too late to contradict. Individual stragglers, however, from the main body of our national Christendom are without doubt increasingly numerous; and from these it is that the two extremes are rapidly recruiting their strength. Whence this change of relative forces? What is it that has weakened the attraction of the central mass of English Christianity? or has added new persuasive power to a religion discarded in the sixteenth century, and an irreligion outlived in the eighteenth?

It cannot be pretended that the Priesthood and the Papacy have any fresh title to show, or can make good their supernatural claims better than before. Nor can it be said that Nature and Humanity, more deeply known, look less Divine; since it is the very pride of science to have won more room for them in space and time, and to have found them grander, older, more progressive, than any one had dreamed. So far as the intrinsic merits of their own case go, Priest and Atheist had never less excuse than now. But weakness in the intermediate faiths is tantamount to strength in them. The Reformation did the work of its time, but not of all time: it shifted the authority without essentially remodelling the inherited theory, of Christianity; and embodied the old scheme of theological thought in its new ecclesiastical constitutions. Nay, in its recoil from shameless laxities, and its jealousy for the Divine holiness, it increased the rigour of the older

definitions; it deepened the chasm between man and God, and cast into the abyss every bridge of approach except its own hair-line of transit. Its doctrine of human nature announced a ruin more absolute, and its provision of supernatural grace promised a rescue more precarious and arbitrary, than could permanently accord with the experience and conscience of mankind. Deep as are Augustine's occasional glances into the passionate depths of the soul, scarcely are his reasonings against the possibility of antipodes more out of place in the present age, than his theory of the moral and spiritual universe, which was crystallized in the creeds of the Reformed Churches. It may be doubted whether, if it rested on an unimpeachable authority, it could retain its life in the open air of modern sympathies and relations. But, dependent as it is on the legends of the Creation and the Fall, and on the Pauline reasonings which proceed upon them, it has been weakened, by the progress of Biblical criticism, in its external supports, whilst losing its internal credibility. The result is too notorious to be concealed, and too serious to be let alone. There is an extensive loosening of belief in the "schemes of salvation," which Protestant Churches are constructed to administer; an uneasiness in preachers who cannot enforce them without consciously refining them away, and in hearers to whom they bring no real conviction; a mutual understanding to lower the standard of religious veracity, and not ask too much sincerity in profession or in prayer. It is no longer an insult to a clergyman's honour, but rather a compliment to his intelligence, to suspect him of saying one thing and believing another; while the layman, who need say nothing, uses a right of reticence which no earnest conviction ever claimed. The theology which is supposed to be the sole directing light of human life, and which once tinctured the whole language of human intercourse, takes refuge in ecclesiastical courts and sectarian newspapers, retains a special order of writers to recommend it, and a select number of publishers to distri-

bute it: while the teeming mass of spontaneous literature throws up no trace of it, and freely treats of social, moral, and scientific questions on principles silently at variance with it.

These are symptoms of weakened cohesion and impaired life in a system once compact and vigorous. Side by side with them appear evident marks of new religious sympathies, and the promise of more natural combinations. Theological groups are breaking up not simply by disintegration from within, but by an unexpected play of mutual attractions. Far apart on the great circles of belief lights have appeared which it is impossible to deny are lights of heaven. Is there a man at once intellectual and devout, in any land where the English language is spoken, who does not own spiritual obligations to *both* the Newmans? or who has not on his choicest shelf both the *Christian Year* and the *In Memoriam*? Is not Mr. Maurice revered as a deliverer by numbers of people, both more and less orthodox than himself? In what cultivated home of English religion has Frederick Robertson not preached his word of power? How little has the repute of "unsoundness" thinned the mixed multitude which throngs to hear every word of a Stanley or a Jowett? Even Scotland feels the stirrings of the new spirit. It is no longer divided into two encampments,—the children of nature under Burns,—the children of grace under Knox; but, gathering the best minds of the land around such men as Lee, Caird, Tulloch, and Macleod, renders its divinity so humane, and its humanity so devout, as to abash the ancient rigour and win over the irreverence it provoked. And this tendency to fusion and readjustment is no mere latitudinarian compromise, the result of indifference or artificial concession, and implying a secret despair of Divine truth. It is a genuine drawing together of soul to soul in defiance of separating lines of definition, the discovery of a ground of communion deeper than the creeds had shown. It arises not from a contracted but from an enlarged conception of the range and power of

sacred truth. Instead of being a mere quiet settlement of quarrels that are past,—the winding-up of an account which it is time to close,—it comes with the surprise of hope, and presses into the future for ampler and more harmonious light.

Persons affected by these influences are ill at ease in their ecclesiastical home, and find their love for it tried by many an uncongenial word or usage. It asks for more concurrence than they can give: and it leaves untouched some affections which long to quit their silence. By the rule of any true assortment, we should say they are misplaced, and are waiting to dispose themselves around new and more natural centres of crystallization. They may very possibly have come to no conscious breach with their inherited orthodoxy, or at least have retained enough of it to save them from any direct transfer of allegiance. But it has ceased to be a religious *essential*, and has descended to the rank of personal *opinion:* towards him who is otherwise minded they cannot keep up the old antipathy: if the piety and charity of a Christian shine through him, they cannot help admitting him to the fellowship of their hearts. When in contact with him they are less sure that his creed is wrong than that his character is right: and crush him as you may in the millwork of your church logic, he will remain alive and whole as a power over their spirits. In every Protestant communion not out of reach of modern culture, and especially in the English and Scotch Churches, and in the Congregational body, this indeterminate state of mind,—clear in spiritual discernment, in suspense on more or fewer definitions of belief,—prevails among vast numbers. They find too much decided for them: they want to be responsible for less doctrine: they would fain take apart for their personal reflection, and reserve among the private rights of their own conscience, many of the topics which their Church has pre-occupied in its corporate constitution or its name. Were everything removed but the simplest conditions of common worship

and common work, and were it left to experience to find *how* simple these are, they would welcome the change as a relief from inward bondage, and throw themselves into their religious fellowship with new affection; an affection infinitely higher than that party-spirit which at present is used to override the scruples of conscience and mimic the activities of pity and of love.

Those who suffer from this over-legislation in matters of belief, may be divided into three different classes:—

1. Some have found the strain put upon their conscience intolerable, and become exiles from all religious association. They remain alone, and tell their deepest thought to none; or gather into private knots, and whisper the secret of their divinest life as if it were a scandal or a sin. They are wanderers unattached, not from any churlish indifference to fellowship in spiritual things, but because they cannot have it without engagements which they dare not take.

2. Others hope for a reform from within their own church; and, while labouring towards the hour of relief, endure as they best can what is repugnant to their convictions. Among Churchmen, national feeling; among Nonconformists, traditions of conscience; and with both, social ties and personal affection, passionately plead for the sanctuary of their fathers, and induce a long patience towards the gravest faults. Language consecrated by ancient piety, and turned into music by tender and solemn memories, ceases to report distinctly to the mind its quality of truth or falsehood, and procures indulgence for prayers and propositions from which, if fresh, the same intelligence would at once recoil. Hence it is, that amid vast theological movements there is no corresponding amount of ecclesiastical change; and that the statistics and creeds of sects do not faithfully represent the inward condition of our Christendom. A sincere man, however, who clings to his Church, in hope of freeing her from errors and exclusiveness, will meanwhile decline responsibility for her narrowness and

antipathies, and insist on freely crossing her lines whithersoever the fellowship of the spirit may carry him. In order to clear a position otherwise not true to him, he will seek some medium of expression for the whole breadth of his catholic sympathies, through which he may bear public witness to the full spiritual capacity of the kingdom of God.

3. Among the Nonconformists who were unchurched by the Act of Uniformity, not a few learned the lesson of persecution aright; and when permitted to build their own "conventicles," and constitute their own societies, refused to put the yoke on others which they had been unable to bear themselves, and dedicated their chapels to Christian worship without specification of usage or of creed. Scope being thus left for natural development, their descendants became familiar with successive doctrinal change, and with simultaneous doctrinal variety without interruption of continuous religious life. To them, therefore, it can be no new thing to consign the articles of theology to the realm of *individual* opinion, and to trust, *as societies*, to a purely spiritual bond. They do not, like the Catholic-minded Churchmen, find themselves members of a body, and under a constitution, far narrower than their own spirit, and obliged to break bounds in order to claim the full measure of Christian fellowship. In the congregations to which they belong, everything is possible which the largest piety can desire, and the latitude of communion which elsewhere is a dream of the future, foreshadowed by the brave catholicity of exceptional men, is the legal rule and corporate principle. There is nothing, therefore, to hinder a society thus constituted from bearing, in its collective capacity, the same witness to the comprehensiveness of the Divine relations which the scattered exiles and the noble malcontents of less open churches individually bear. Unfortunately, these Nonconformist communities have not always worked out persistently their own historical principle, but have fallen into usages which have arrested the natural

growth and limited the spiritual freedom left possible to them at their birth. There is no breadth of intellectual basis, no depth of spiritual union, which the Independency of Robinson and the Presbyterianism of Baxter might not have reached. But each has parted with its early promise, and settled on its selected dogmatic lands, duly fenced or labelled; the one fixing itself in Trinitarian orthodoxy,* the other in Unitarian heresy; the former guarding its position by precautionary tests, the latter content, for the most part, with the warning of a doctrinal name. Explain it as we may, there would seem to be something transient, and incapable of passing into *institution*, in the higher action of God's Spirit in history. Again and again religious movements, springing from an impulse truly Divine, and proclaiming the purest spiritual trusts, prove unable to sustain themselves at the height of their first inspiration, and, like Quakerism and Methodism, descend to a lower ground,—a ground which, with or without the originating fervour, they can permanently command,—viz., that of a specific creed and an established discipline. And so, that which is "born of the spirit" dies down into a theological school, or a philanthropic habit, or an ecclesiastical organization. Still, among those who inherit the traditions of the age of Milton, Hale, and Baxter, there are many who have caught the spirit of their aims, while outgrowing the forms of their belief; who honour them for not having embarrassed their successors by names and standards of their own; who look upon every new doctrinal element built into the structure of a church as an impertinence insulting to the great Master-builder; and who feel bound to leave the

* This is true, however, only of the *English* line of descent. In America, Independency has been less stationary; the Unitarianism of New England being preached, for the most part, from the pulpits of churches still calling themselves "Congregational." On the other hand, the Presbyterian Church of the United States retains, we believe, without exception, its orthodox creed; being of Scotch and Irish, and not of English or Baxterian descent.

future tenants of their sanctuaries free to think their thought and pray their prayer, without the pain of breaking with the past, of erasing its inscriptions, and declaring its identity gone. Such persons are ready for a religious fellowship not based upon doctrinal conditions. It is happy for them that often they may have it in their own worshipping society by simply recalling that society to its half-forgotten Catholic basis.

Among all these persons there is, and there has long been, the movement of a common spirit. They are all averse to both the Sacerdotal and the Atheistical view of the world. They none of them insist on any form of orthodoxy, though it be their own, as essential to the pious union of men or their filial relation to God. The "unattached," who find the place of public prayer uncongenial, and have gone "up into the mountain alone," are willing to return when the devotion shall speak what they can truly say. The "broad-churchmen" are ready to widen their communion with the expanding limits of national piety, not excluding the fullest doctrinal theology, but requiring the least. The liberal Nonconformists, weary of sectarian interests, wanting more room for their faith and affections, and finding that companionship in the school of divinity is no guarantee of spiritual sympathy, are longing for a larger fellowship and a freer use of their right of growth. What is the essence of this common spirit pervading such different classes?—Is it intellectual agreement? Is there any sort of creed which these people could club together to propagate? By no means; unless you call it a creed to have a fearless respect for intellectual freedom, and to trust the bonds of piety, righteousness, and love amid large varieties of thought. This trust you may, no doubt,—if you must convert into a dogma everything which the human mind can hold,—express in a proposition to be believed. But this is your work at the end, not its way of beginning. Its birth is in the moral and spiritual nature; and those whom it possesses have been

carried towards one another, not by deliberate steering to or from the same lines on the logical chart, but by those silent changes in the moral currents beneath, and in the winds of heaven around, which sometimes mysteriously turn the drift of human affairs.

To many of those who feel the impulse of this common spirit, it has appeared that its distinct expression and embodiment could be nothing but a pure good. Without undervaluing the influence of scattered persons of catholic mind, they distrust the religious power which depends upon suppression or reserve, and think the time has come, for those who cannot rest in the present, to mark publicly the direction of their looks towards the Church of the Future. From this conviction has sprung the "FREE CHRISTIAN UNION," intended to serve as a rallying-point for reformers who deem the doctrinal requirements of existing sects excessive and superfluous, and who would be content with any Church inspired, according to the Christian rule, with Love to God and Love to Man. It is not surprising that an organized movement with such an aim should be exposed to criticism from the most opposite sides. Assuming as it does that the present ecclesiastical distribution of men is false to the real religious facts, and is radically wrong in its very basis, it encounters, as a matter of course, the hostility of all the denominational journals, whose function it is to speak for a doctrine and a sect. Finding the essence of religious union in spiritual obligations, which, being eternally real, are older and larger than Christendom, it offends persons who want in their Christianity something which they may have all to themselves. Taking the name "Christian" to mark the source whence the living consciousness of these obligations has reached us here, it disappoints those who look with greater favour on other sources of the same light. These are natural objections, and relatively to the persons who bring them, of considerable force. They indicate that the Union must not expect adherents from the contented members of doctrinal sects,

or from Christians who begrudge all Divine relations beyond their pale; or from non-Christians for whom the largest truth is spoiled by having flowed, as the one thing needful, from the lips of Jesus. From no one of these classes, however, could adherents ever be expected. They render the Union a service of another kind, by putting it to the severest test, and showing where it needs defence. To render that defence satisfactory, we must reproduce the preamble on which the discussion turns.

"Whereas, for ages past, Christians have been taught that correct conceptions of Divine things are necessary to acceptance with God, and to religious relations with each other;

"And, in vain pursuit of Orthodoxy, have parted into rival Churches, and lost the bond of common work and love:

"And whereas, with the progressive changes of thought and feeling, uniformity in doctrinal opinion becomes ever more precarious, while moral and spiritual affinities grow and deepen:

"And whereas, the Divine Will is summed up by Jesus Christ himself in Love to God and Love to Man;

"And the terms of pious union among men should be as broad as those of communion with God:

"This Society, desiring a spiritual fellowship co-extensive with these terms, invites to common action all who deem men responsible, not for the attainment of Divine truth, but only for the serious search of it; and who rely, for the religious improvement of human life, on filial Piety and brotherly Charity, with or without more particular agreement in matters of doctrinal theology. Its object is, by relieving the Christian life from reliance on theological articles or external rites, to save it from conflict with the knowledge and conscience of mankind, and bring it back to the essential conditions of harmony between God and Man."

This preamble is first met by the objection, that, while it denounces sects and disparages doctrine, it proposes to

establish a new sect upon a doctrine of its own. It is, therefore, only a fresh proof that all common religious action must be founded, as the Churches assume, in accordant belief, and involve a creed.

It might, perhaps, be sufficient to reply, that the Preamble nowhere proposes to dispense with theological belief, or with agreement in it, as a ground of religious union. Such proposal would be simply insane: "He that cometh to God must believe that he is:" and if twenty people come to God, they must agree in believing that He is. So far is the preamble from denying this, that it directly assumes *some* "agreement in matters of doctrinal theology" to be involved in "filial Piety and brotherly Charity;" only dispenses with "*more particular agreement*" than these affections carry in them. The complaint brought against the sects is, in effect, twofold: that they demand *too much* theological agreement; and that they *bespeak and define the particular points* on which this agreement shall take place. By this explicit notice beforehand of what they must have from their members, they prefix the intellectual process to the spiritual, and postpone the experiment of moral and religious sympathy, till problems which raise a host of scruples are laid to rest. Can it be needful to point out the distinction between "*belief*," an inward state of the human mind, and a "*creed*," a "*doctrine*," a "*dogma*," the verbal definition of that state? or to show how illogical is the inference that religious union, because involving belief in common, must be based upon doctrine? All the moral transactions of men with each other,—their contracts, their testimony, their resentments,—involve also certain beliefs, the assumptions inseparable from our ethical nature. But who would ever propose, as a preliminary to an insurance or a deposit, to know the moral philosophy of the broker or the banker, and be sure of his intuitional or utilitarian orthodoxy? For confidence and co-operation in social relations it is enough that the right affections and character be there: let there be honour, fine temper, and veracity, and the

united life is secure, however different may be the intellectual reports they give of their own ground. While the philosophers are disputing about the foundation of property, and cannot take even the first step together, all the wealth of the world is under peaceable ownership, and has changed hands a hundred times. While the economists were all in the dark, or all at issue, about the nature of exchange, the hum of a million markets never ceased. No œcumenical council of the wise could even now settle the definitions of Justice and of Right: yet the voice of law has never paused, and the tribunals have never been shut. The religious union of men may be left, just as safely as the moral, to the natural play of spiritual affinities, and the mutual understanding of affection and character; and, for the common life of devout and humane duty, it is quite superfluous to think out its processes and grounds into defined speculative form. The more you keep the pious union waiting for the right theory, the more certain is the theory to go wrong, and the more fantastic become the lines of aberration: for, till the common life has been led, and its inward experiences gained, the very materials are out of reach which thought has to mould into truth. The "Free Christian Union" simply proposes to restore the natural order of religious organization and growth; to leave the formative power with the sympathetic impulses of Piety and Charity; to be content with the real, though unformulated, common faith in God and the Divine relations of Man which these two forms of love imply; and to let *doctrine*, *i.e.*, the intellectual statement and definition of particular beliefs, follow, not as a corporate act of the Church, but as a private function of individual minds. This is neither a disparagement of doctrine, nor the announcement of a new one. It certainly alters,—if you please, inverts,—the relation of doctrine to the combined religious life. But, in doing so,—in withdrawing it from the public vote of incompetent assemblies, and delivering it freely over to the domain of personal research,—the

scheme makes infinitely better provision for its interests and its integrity than by surrendering it to be rent in pieces as the party symbol of the councils and the sects.

As this practical proposal can with no propriety be called "a new doctrine," so neither can the "Union" be correctly called a "new sect." A sect is (in religion) an ecclesiastical body formed by schism from previous churches, or in rivalry to them, for the expression of some idea, or the establishment of some usage, unprovided for by them. The "Free Christian Union," on the other hand, simply selects from among the ends already contemplated by Christian Churches, the spiritual and catholic elements, and lets them try their binding power apart from other conditions, which often oppress and baffle them. Its supporters do not themselves intend to withdraw, nor do they desire to withdraw others, from their existing ecclesiastical connection, but only to bear witness to what is supremely excellent in it, and help to clear its essence from its accidents. They have provided no place in their scheme for the training or the employment of a clerical order, for any separate institutions, rites, or worship: and the only pulpit which they have proposed to raise was to be served by occasional preachers stepping out for the day from their own denomination, and returning to it again. They believe, no doubt, that in the principle which unites them lies the germ of the future universal church; and if here and there a body of worshippers is already held together by its simple power, they are ready to enter into fellowship with them, and help their work. But this fostering function, this welcome of spontaneous promise, this offer of refuge to those who can save the spirit, apart from the questionable form, belongs to a *society*, not to a *sect;* and is provided for throughout by lay, and not by ecclesiastical, machinery. The Committee of the Union has already explained its attitude in these words:—

"By silence about many things which, in the present state of society, are indispensable to the integrity of an

ecclesiastical organization, we openly disclaim the purpose of forming a new sect. We desire to assume, in relation to the liberal elements scattered among the churches, a *Federal position:* leaving untouched, as belonging to the several rights of each section, the domestic specialities of doctrine and usage which may be needful to complete its corporate life; and reserving, for central expression and universal allegiance, only the common essence which binds the whole into a divine organism. Hitherto, there has been nothing to gather up and represent the rights and obligations of spiritual Unity: they have remained confusedly mixed with the perishable beliefs and eccentric institutions of innumerable sects; every fresh body of seceders has arrogated to itself the entire representation of the Christian life; and, amid the hosts of collateral sects, with equal and incompatible pretensions, no visible symbol exists of the religious league of humanity. Our hope is, to give to the essential conditions of Christian life a centre of their own, where they may try their power unmixed over some small territory, and offer an asylum to any one who shrinks from more complex allegiance, without shortening their arm of authority in regions which have their own commonwealth besides."

"But your preamble," it is next said, "does not stop in its extensive embrace with the distinctive genius of Christianity. In contenting itself with filial Piety and brotherly Charity, and in making religious fellowship among men coextensive with the communion of God, it asks for no more than the Jew, the Mahomedan, the Indian or the English Theist can give, and so ceases to be Christian altogether." To be thus comprehensive, then, is inconsistent, is it, with being Christian? The question has happily been decided by a case in point. A Jew once came to Jesus and asked him what were the conditions of "everlasting life." For answer he referred the inquirer—to what?—to some new terms,—some rule from the Sermon on the Mount,—some faith or duty never heard of till the recent Advent?—No:

but to the old "law," written from the first not only "on tables of stone, but on the living tables of the heart:" and when the Israelite himself, with true selection, had cited thence the two great commandments of Love, the problem was solved, and the answer came: "*This do, and thou shalt live*" (Luke x. 28). Unless, therefore, the disciples are to be more fastidious than the Master, nay, unless men are to reject whom God receives, a spiritual fellowship does not cease to be Christian by being large enough to embrace the Jew. And, under like conditions, his case covers all the rest. Those who think that Jesus Christ, if among us now, would take no notice of such men as F. W. Newman and Keshub Chunder, and would not rather commune with them in every retreat of trial and prayer, must read the lineaments of his spirit more strangely than the author of "Phases of Faith" himself. How marvellous it is that Christian advocates insist on the universality of the gospel, contrast it, as embracing humanity, with religions limited to nation or to race, and show that this is because it lays bare the *real* living imperishable relations, seated in the spiritual constitution of the world, between the mind of man and the mind of God; and yet the moment you take them at their word, and conclude that wherever these real Divine relations are recognized and revered, the essential ends of Christianity are attained, or at least attainable, they denounce as blasphemous the conclusion which legitimately flows from their own pious premisses! If it be the characteristic of the religion of Christ to be unexclusive,—its speciality to sweep away all specialities,—if its confession is, "In every nation he that feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of Him," it is not possible to be Christian without owning the devout and righteous, irrespective of nation and sect. Did the Union narrow the range of its principle, in order to detain its members' sympathies within "the household of faith," it would forfeit, instead of earning, the Christian name.

Here enters a critic from the opposite side, and says:

"I too find your principle too broad for your name; I would get rid of the misadjustment, however, not by contracting the principle, but by discarding the name. The word '*Christian*,' by which you designate the Union, neutralizes your profession of fellowship with persons who will not call themselves so, or who are attached to other historical religions. How can they join you, at the cost of assuming what to them must be a label of apostasy?"

As the previous objection was made *against* the Jew, the Mahomedan, and the non-Christian Theist, so is this made *on their behalf*, and with especial force, by Professor Newman in his recent "Thoughts on a free and comprehensive Christianity." It is founded on a misconception, not of the sentiment and principle of the movement which he criticizes, but of its working field. The Union owns "spiritual fellowship" with all devout and faithful men, of whatsoever fold: it "invites them to common action," each on his own appointed ground, be it Islam, Christendom, Israel, or among the Hindoos; but *its own* object is avowedly "to relieve the *Christian Life*" from false reliances, and "bring it back to the essential conditions of harmony between God and Man:" and for this reason it appeals to persons in sympathy with that life, and calls itself "The Free *Christian* Union." It is quite fanciful to say that the Union has sought for members among Jews, Mahomedans, Parsees, Bengal Theists, and all the decent religions of the world. Not one of these classes has ever been in the contemplation of its founders, being to all intents and purposes out of sight and reach. The only pretext for such a statement is, that the *principle* of the preamble is Catholic enough to be applied to them, if they were practically at hand. This no doubt is true; the principle being Christian, it could not be otherwise. The question therefore is, whether it is allowable, first to lay down a rule of universal import and recommend it to the acceptance of any one whom it may concern; and then to select a particular field

for its immediate application, and to organize for the work the persons fittest to act upon that field.

Confront the question with human life, and surely the answer is unambiguous. Action, however large its principle, *must* take its cases one by one: and the range of cases which any given instrument can reach lies within strict limits. To assign and to keep these limits is not to betray the principle, but to lend it the efficiency of practical wisdom. If a man founds a hospital, it is no imputation on his universal humanity that its provisions extend no further than the boundaries of Middlesex; nor would even Surrey people charge him with inconsistency, though he should preface his bequest with acknowledgment, in general terms, of the duty of helping the distressed. If a Wesley or a Brainerd chooses to address himself to some class specially accessible to him in all localities, and to leave others to agencies distinct, the selection does not derogate from his impartial "zeal for souls." The apostle Paul's gospel was not less comprehensive because his missionary field was the Gentile world, and he abandoned the Jewish pale to the Judaic twelve. Similarly, the Free Christian Union chooses, in preference to foreign religions, "*the Christian life*" at home as its province for carrying out a principle intrinsically applicable beyond, and tries to organize a service fittest for this work. Mahomedans and Hindoos would help it about as well as those who "seemed to be pillars" at Jerusalem would have "added to" Paul at Athens. To found a charge of exclusiveness on such practical limitation of instruments and work is as reasonable in the one case as in the other.

The phrase "Christian Union," then, like the phrase "Gentile Church," marks only the main recruiting field and sphere of operations selected for an enterprise which may have other provinces and other agencies. Whenever Jews, Mahomedans, and Hindoos apply themselves to the same work, they will offend no one by forming a Free Jewish Union, a Free Mahomedan Union, a Free Hindoo Union:

and, meanwhile, they have no ground for offence in the example of a Free Christian Union. Professor Newman supposes quite an imaginary grievance when he puts the case thus: "How could you ask the Jew to range himself with you under the name *Christian?* What would you think of me if I asked you to call yourselves *Jesuits?* Yet this is no more insulting than that." The answer is simple: "We have *not* asked the Jew to call himself Christian, nor have we offered the name to any one who feels it a dishonour to bear it." The different feeling towards this name, the clinging to it, the shrinking from it, is a *fact* too deeply grounded to be ignored. Among those who are attached to it there is some surviving moral homogeneity: while those whom it offends are a heterogeneous multitude with only the negative conditions of sympathy. Exceptional individuals on the one side may be drawn by congenial thought and affection to a few upon the other. But when we are looking for natural lines in the organization of masses, it would be blindness to treat the boundary as invisible, or to deny that the groups on either hand will do better work if they work apart. Mr. Newman thinks it an indispensable condition of a purer religion to remove the authority of Jesus Christ. Many who love and honour him plead for the very same religion on the authority, or as embodied in the life, of Jesus Christ. Surely it is in the interest of their common mission, as servants of Divine Righteousness and Love, that he and they should pursue it with characteristic instruments and on separate tracks.

Those who repudiate the Christian name are naturally anxious, ere they throw it away, to take out of it whatever beauty and value it may have held, and to surrender it into the hands which have most spoiled it. Hence they turn round with displeasure on every natural ally, who, within the Church, has been trying to redeem the name, and with prayer and fasting cast the demons out of it; and applaud every bigot's claim who succeeds in making it the vehicle of his own ravings, and hands it over to be repossessed

after fruitless exorcism, by seven other spirits worse than the first. It is perhaps a remnant of Mr. Newman's early orthodoxy, that he takes the word "*as commonly understood*," and shuts up within it all the accepted creeds. In his view, you are but retaining *the pretence* of Christianity, when you have got rid of "what has *hitherto been regarded* as essential to it" ("Thoughts," p. 13); and your "pretentious phraseology" provokes in "the orthodox an enmity not unjust." Who ever heard before, from scholar, reformer, and heretic, a voice so in tune with Exeter Hall, and giving such an account of the "notes" of the church? If the "hitherto regarded," the "commonly understood," and the "orthodox," are to determine what Christianity is, every attempt to cleanse the stream of tradition, and recover any purer water of life, has been misplaced; it may flow on as it arrives, and when it has drained off the unreason of all the ages, the "British Public" and Lord Shaftesbury shall tell us all about it. Thus to degrade Christianity into an epitome of the opinions which a medley of populations and centuries of ignorance have voted into their ecclesiastical mythology, is surely a superfluous act of historical despair. And it leaves the name, after all, in the most indeterminate condition—resolved to stand for *some* creed, but unable to say *what*. Change your place or time, and the "hitherto regarded," and "commonly understood," will change too. Is it the "orthodoxy" of Rome or of Geneva, of the Deanery of St. Paul's or the Deanery of Westminster, of the second century or the sixth or the sixteenth, which has the right to keep the keys of the Christian name, and open and shut it at will? Are all to be deemed Christians by whom the structure of Dogma was gradually built up? yet none to be Christians by whom it has been gradually taken down, however nearly the two series may correspond, term for term? Or if you allow, without forfeiture, the first subtraction from doctrine or history as "hitherto regarded," on what plea can you refuse ulterior simplifications? At what point in the scale of doubt does the excommunication

take effect, and the "enmity not unjust," begin? May the Doctrine of the Mass be questioned, but not the Real Presence?—or the Real Presence, but not the Trinity?—or the Trinity, but not the Incarnation?—or the Incarnation, but not the Messiahship? And as to matters of history, what may the critic take, and what must he leave? May he remove the dates, only not the things dated? or the Flood, but not the Fall?—or some of the miracles of the Old Testament,—as those of Joshua and Jonah,—but none of the New? Make what selection you may, it must be simply arbitrary, denying for the future the very principle of change which has landed you in the present. Endless confusion arises from the assumption that Christianity is identical with some "orthodoxy" of thought, instead of being a principle of spiritual life, a peculiar type of conscious relation between humanity and God, revealed and infused by the Divine ministry of Jesus Christ. Whoever so clings to this conscious relation, and is so at one with the distinctive religious life of Christendom, as to value his place there, has a right of asylum in its sanctuary and partnership in its name, whoever may pursue him with the bell, book, and candle of orthodox displeasure.

We often hear it said that, where there is agreement about *things*, it is idle to waste discussion upon *names*: and it has been pronounced a matter of indifference whether liberal-minded church reformers organize themselves in "Free *Religious* Union," or in "Free *Christian* Union." The remark has neither reason or experience on its side. In the world of physical objects, it is true, things dominate over names, and can take care of themselves, while their vocabulary shifts. But in the world of ideas, in philosophy, in morals, in religion, words dominate over things, and in their significance are even identical with things, and are as much the living organism of thought, as the wing and throat of the bird are the conditions of action for its especial nature. Cynicism is seldom shallower than when it laughs at the "power of words" over what it contemptuously

calls "the popular imagination." Power they certainly have. They are alive with sweetness, with terror, with pity. They have eyes, to look at you with strangeness or with response. They are even creative, and can wrap a world in darkness for us, or flood it with light. But in all this, they are not signs of the weakness of humanity: they are the very crown and blossom of its supreme strength; and the poet whom this faith possesses will, to the end of time, be master of the critic whom it deserts. The whole inner life of men moulds the forms of language, and is moulded by them in turn; and as surely pines when they are rudely treated, as the plant whose vessels you bruise or try to replace with artifical tubes. The grouping of thought, the musical scale of feeling, the shading and harmonies of colour in the spectrum of imagination, have all been building, as it were, the molecules of speech into their service; and if you heedlessly alter its dispositions, pulverize its crystals, fix its elastic media, and turn its transparent into opake,—you not only disturb expression; you dislodge the very things to be expressed. And in proportion as the idea or sentiment thus turned adrift is less of a mere personal characteristic, and has been gathering and shaping its elements from ages of various affection and experience, does it become less possible to replace it by any equivalents, or dispense with its function by any act of will. The word "Christian" is the casket which holds for human thought the supreme treasures of the inner life of man, and the most precious gems of his external civilization; and when all has been emptied out from it which false zeal and mistaken piety have stored there for safe keeping, there yet remains, in the catholic genius of the religion, the richest historic deposit with which Providence has blessed the world. To part with that word, and throw ourselves upon philosophy to weave us a substitute, would be to interrupt the Past in its creation of the Future, and not only to migrate to unreclaimed countries, but to sink the old native land that we

might do so. Part as we may with what once was demanded by the Church, there is something,—and that, too, the very holiest influence in life,—that is still with us; and this residuary truth, this Divine spirit, which emerges from the mixed inheritance of Christendom when all that is perishable has been discharged, does but *own its descent, and look up with fitting reverence to its fountain-head*, when it claims the name of *Christian*. Possibly, the same truth and the same affection may be reached by the meditative thinker as the fruit of a devout philosophy; by the Indian Theist, as a purification of his native faith; by the Mahomedan, as the inner meaning of his sacred oracles; by the Jew, as the natural development of the Law and the Prophets. If so, may God speed them all! But each will find his mission best among his own spiritual kindred. Here, in England, we have to do, not with Mahomedans and Hindoos, but with Christians. We ourselves have been moulded by a Christian literature and civilization. We love the Christian hymns and memories and prayers. We must appeal to Christian influences and susceptibilities. We must avail ourselves of such pure admirations and faiths as are ready-made around us, and point to the acknowledged symbols of Divine truth and beauty. And in this spirit, and with these resources, we elect to do our work *among those who stand with us as partners of the same historical inheritance, and of the same undeniable essentials.*

Whether it is hopeless now to save the name "Christian" from theological abuse, and allow it, in its large historical sense, to those who find the original of their religion in the religion of Christ, may be not unnaturally questioned by a desponding observer of men. But that the attempt, as made by the "Free Christian Union," should, in the eyes of even the worst interpreter, "seem very *sinister*" (Newman's "Thoughts," p. 9), is surely impossible. "Those who have active belief in Christianity" will complain, we are told, that a trick has been put upon them, and will say,

"By calling the Union Christian, you allure us to believe that it is confined to Christians, and suddenly we discover that non-Christians are admitted." But did we not, we reply, tell you in the preamble what we meant by Christianity? and did we not invite those only "who rely for the religious improvement of human life, on filial Piety and brotherly Charity, with or without more particular agreement in doctrinal theology?" If you rely on something else, or require "more particular agreement," how can you say that we have "allured" you hither? You had fair notice to keep away.

Indeed the warning given in the preamble to all dogmatic Christians that the Union cannot meet their wants, is so emphatic as to provoke just the opposite criticism; that the scheme is romantically simpleminded, and while offering the broadest fellowship, will frighten everybody away. Does it not leave room for Unitarians, as well as Trinitarians? And "a total change of judgment, equivalent to a religious revolution, must pass over England, before those who are called orthodox will be able to desire spiritual union with deniers of the divine Trinity" (Newman's "Thoughts," &c. p. 10). Be it so. Is it not notorious that in England "a total change of judgment, equivalent to a religious revolution," is actually taking place, and disposing to "spiritual union" those who could never approach one another before? During periods of fermenting thought and rapid change, the old hard lines of theological division variously bend and shift and melt away in the minds of living men, long before they give any sign of softening on the written creeds. How many men remain "orthodox" enough to listen without restiveness to the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed? And if, without abandoning the doctrine of the Trinity, they would take its excommunication off, what is to hinder their religious recognition of persons who cannot accept the formula? The moment you shrink from the idea of "exclusive salvation," and no longer dare to plant your differing brother outside the

Divine relations which embrace yourself, the real barrier to spiritual fellowship is gone, and the separation is no greater than that which, on any subject of intellectual interest, parts the schools of speculative opinion. Nay, it is much less: for where the interest is purely scientific, there is nothing to qualify the rivalries of theory, so that the contrasts of thought are sharpened till they become all in all; while in religion, as soon as it is felt to involve a common relation between each man and God, there is a blending affection, a sympathy of reverence and aspiration, a conscious co-presence with Infinitude of Goodness, under the power of which the varieties of opinion retire into insignificance. To what extent the Christianity of laymen in England and Scotland has reached this stage no statistics can tell. But it is certain that amongst them there are few who adhere to a stiff and made-up theology; and many whom such a theology has alienated from all ecclesiastical institutions. Probably the largest number of those who think and feel at all upon the subject, would be found between these two; with no very active or conscious revolt from what they habitually hear; yet with faith of very varying intensity in different parts of the scale,—deep and strong in the great spiritual and moral bases of devout life, —faint and superficial in the subtler articles of disputed theology. To class all these people together as alike "orthodox," and to attribute to them the inaccessible and exclusive temper of the well-drilled and rigid divine, would be mere blindness to the realities of life around us. To assume that, as soon as ever their creed has relaxed, they will forthwith think out their hesitations and push them home to a "Sic et Non," and, if consistency required, go over at once to another church, would be a ludicrous misinterpretation of the actual world by the logical obligations of the schools. Human belief on the highest subjects does not hasten thus to set into a definite shape,—selected, too, from the limited variety of types at present existing for its choice. Long after its effective pulse has ceased to beat,

it retains a species of half-life, like the disembodied souls in Hades; now and then haunting the upper light, a "tristis imago, sæpius occurrens;" oftener hid, except from memory, in the shades below; still accosted with some pious recognition; only, at each near approach which sympathy may make to it, eluding the living embrace:

> "Ter conatus ibi collo dare brachia circum:
> Ter frustra comprensa manus effugit imago,
> Par levibus ventis, volucrique simillima somno."

A large portion of the homage visibly paid to the traditional theology of our churches is but a worship of the Manes of ancestral beliefs. The pious office will long continue: but it no longer hinders the living generation from forming new affinities beyond the bounds of its own spiritual clan, and widening its relations as the intellectual world expands. In an age abounding with these phenomena of shifting and suspended faith, not all the work of guidance and fellowship can be effected by the churches of set theology. And if others find it more congenial to occupy together the central entrenchments of spiritual Christianity, and leave the lines of thought for access thither and excursion thence open in all directions, there are wanderers enough abroad, it is believed, to make their asylum welcome. None dwell in securer peace than those who defend only the defensible: and if they offer an impregnable retreat to the freedmen and exiles of the territory around, they will not wait long to extend their census and their walls; and may leave it to the future to determine, whether their enclosure shall disappear with the momentary want, or shall grow upon the map of Time into a true City of God.

XIV.

A WAY OUT OF THE TRINITARIAN CONTROVERSY.*

THERE is a charity, as well as a zeal, which is "not according to knowledge," and on which, therefore, no reliance can be placed for permanently abating the divisions and harmonizing the aims of the Christian world. It is found in men of kindly temper and broad natural sense, who look right at the visible surface of life, without regard to the medium through which they see it, or the mysteries that lie behind it, and cannot imagine why so many common wants and interests,—so much work to be done and sorrow to be soothed and borne,—do not make us all *one* in humane and forbearing affection. Such an observer, occupied with what comes before him, and content to rest in it, asks for no theory of it, and cares nothing for the several interpretations of it by the competing creeds of Christendom. He supposes all these differences quite superficial or purely ideal; takes no pains to appreciate them in detail; and expects, by smiling indulgently on them all, to make them gradually forget themselves, and fall into the open arms of his comprehensive benevolence. In private life this genial mood softens away asperities, and neutralizes many an acrid propensity. For the bigotry of mere temperament, the charity of mere temperament is the appropriate check; and we may bless God for the "honest

* *Christian Reformer*, 1886.

and good hearts" that so often sweeten with loving gifts of nature the sour pretences of special grace. But still, the differences of religious faith and feeling are beyond the handling of most accomplished good-humour. They lie very deep below the surface of thought and action. They are unimportant only to him who is in truth a stranger to them all; to others they have a meaning that colours the whole universe, and fills the common forms of life with a distinctive spirit. Religious doctrine may be only theory to the critic, but it is the expression of *fact* to the believer, —fact infinite and ever present, the vital breath of every moment, deprived of which the soul must gasp and die. To know something of the source whence we come, and find there not a fermenting chemistry, but a holy love; to draw near till the eye of the living God gleams on the uplifted face, and the communion of spirits shows that he is there; to shrink from him in sin, to seek quiet with him in sorrow, and to trust him everywhere; to gain assurance of his will, be reconciled to his affection, and hopeful of his heaven,—these things are to some men indispensable necessities, without which they would esteem it better that they had never been born. It is from the depth of such natures that theology and churches arise; and if you would harmonize them when they seem discordant, you must descend into like depths; you must feel their truth ere you criticize their errors, and appreciate their difference before you can persuade them that they are one. If controversy is ever to cease, it will not be by good-natured indifference to all earnest conviction, but by a sympathy profound enough to understand it; by a charity, not of easy indulgence, but of genuine insight; by a full trust in the *under-truth* that feeds the roots of all our faiths. There is no short cut, no lazy path, to a true Christian love. It does not consist in mere reaction from sectarian rigour; in dislike of all exact beliefs; in outcries against fanaticism and cold-hearted taste for "moderation"; in turning the blind side of the mind to all that lies beyond the secular moralities. Real charity is

not negative,—a simple freedom from antipathies; but positive,—a reverential sympathy with what is true and fair and good in the mixed products of our humanity, and through this, a tender allowance for the rest. It is a grace of open eye. To feel charity towards a *sin*, you must understand the temptation; towards a *sorrow*, you must know its depth; towards an *erring creed*, you must appreciate its meaning and its ground. In the oldest, if not the most momentous controversy of Christendom,—in the controversy which divides Unitarians from churches called orthodox,—I find a mutual misunderstanding of an extraordinary kind, to explain which will go far to remove it; and to remove it is to prepare the way for conscious approximation of Christians the most widely separate.

Unitarians believe in *One God in One Person*. In their conceptions of him they follow the bent of their practical genius and plain moral feeling, alike averse to metaphysical refinements, ethical coarseness, and imaginative fervour; selecting as their favourites those scriptural designations of him which touch no tender scruple of taste and conscience and raise no deep problem in the reason. Trained, too often, under the influence of two favourite maxims;—that "Where mystery begins religion ends," and that "Plain texts must be taken as guides and measures to the meaning of the obscure," they lay but a secondary stress on those which savour of mystic depth or moral boldness. And so they think of God as the great original Mind, uncaused and eternal, from whose thought the plan, from whose power the execution, from whose goodness the right and happy issues of this universe proceed. With what he is in himself, irrespective of his works,—with what he was in any lone eternity prior to the life-giving fiat of his will, they do not concern themselves: they begin with the creation, in whose laws they see the impress of his wisdom and the scope of his omnipotence. And as the visible creation starts the *date*, so does its extent determine the *range*, of their religion. Wherever law and order go, there is the

witness of their God: he is coextensive with the organism of nature, beyond which their contemplation is not accustomed to pass. Freely, indeed, they will own to you that God is more than nature,—has a being that transcends it and might at any moment change or annihilate it. But this only means that other things were possible to him than he has ordained,—things excluded by the system that prevails. It does not mean that there is a real and actual realm, in which he lives and operates, to-day and to-morrow, out of his own free spirit, and supplements fixed legislation by flexible affection. His existence always renders an interruption of natural law *possible;* and once or twice in history this possibility has been realized in miracle or special inspiration: but the case is exceptional and past. Of any *permanent* preternatural activity of God, any sphere in which he has bound himself by no rules, but reserves and uses still his first fresh creative rights, Unitarians have little conception. Their religion is *since* nature and history, and *within* nature and history. *Here*, they think, God's work is determinate and known; and the outlying region of mystery is to them as though it were not, a forbidden field into which imagination is tempted only to be lost.*

What then are the characters, what the Divine acts, with which Unitarians fill in their idea of God? He is the *Author of the universe*, creating it from thoughts of beauty and beneficence; and its Preserver, sustaining it constant by his fidelity. He is the *Father of Spirits* stamped with

* I need hardly caution the reader against taking my description of the two opposite theologies as if it were valid in all particulars of their present living adherents. Both of them were formed in a now distant past, which gave them their defining lines: and, for the purpose of any exact insight into their relative characteristics, it is necessary to look at them in their historical existence and operation; and especially as they presented themselves in what may be termed the classical periods of the Trinitarian Controversy. On both sides, insensible movements of approximation have softened the old contrasts; though survivals enough of each type remain, to test the truth of the comparison which I have drawn.

his likeness and conscious of his law; their Moral Governor, training them by his discipline, helping them by his sympathy, warning them by his retribution; their eternal Judge, of whose holiness it comes that he accepts repentance and remembers mercy, and hastes to meet the prodigal's return. He is the *Providence of history*, arranging the acts of its great drama, distributing to nations their genius, to prophets their inspiration, to heroes their place and parts; and evolving from the web of *relations*, traversed by individual impulse, shapes of design and tints of beauty, which no mind but his had preconceived. And as he perpetually *is* in himself and *does* all this, so especially did he let us know it through Jesus Christ, in whom he dwelt, the Light Divine amid human shadows; through whom, in parable and miracle, in deepest words and purest sacrifice, he made us wonder at his grace and truth; and to whom, the risen and glorified, he draws our hearts, now set on things above. These are the attributes and offices that, in the Unitarian view, constitute the being who holds them, *God*. He that bears these marks,—He that is Source of nature, Soul of souls, Lord of the earth, and Fountain of Grace, appears under every aspect that is divine, and fills to our thought the whole space that is accessible to affection, trust, and adoration.

Trinitarians believe in *One God in three Persons*: either making room, by this numerical enlargement, for more than was comprised in the simpler conception; or else re-disposing in triple arrangement, the characteristics which before were held to a single centre. The word "*Person*," I need hardly observe, is not to be understood in its ordinary sense, to denote a separate free agent, detached from all others by individuality of essence and will. If it were so,—if the three names of the Godhead denoted beings distinct from one another "as three angels or three men," their worshipper would be justly chargeable with Tritheism. I dare not say that this charge is never true. Too probably, many a disciple, unschooled in the fine

distinctions of a Greek theology, thinks of the Father chiefly as the God prior to the plan of Incarnation; of the Son as the historical figure in the gospels, of the Holy Ghost as the agent sent on the day of Pentecost to take the place of the ascended Christ. He fancies these acting each on the others as outside beings, and conducting a divine drama among themselves; and as he directs his prayers, now to one, now to another, they sit apart within his faith; and his awe, his aspiration, his affections, flow into no living unity. This may be the fault, and is assuredly the danger, of the doctrine; but is far from being its real meaning and intent. To understand it aright, we must reduce our idea of *personality* to a much fainter shade. We must melt, as it were, its edges away, till the sharp outline is gone, and we can no longer tell where one ends and another begins, for both merge in a common ground. We must think of the three persons as so many nuclei of intenser light, distinguishable amid the universal element of divine thought, around which the attributes cluster with a certain preferential affinity, without, however, ceasing to exist in the same essence, of which all are alike affirmable. In short, the ground colour of the doctrine is laid in the Greek Pantheism, which conceived of God as *the thinking power of the universe*. In comparison with this infinite element, *Personality*, implying concentration and distinction of qualities, appeared finite and inadequate. To reconcile the two,—to retain the mystic breadth of the one, with the human intensity of the other, personal differences were superinduced upon a Divine essence that underlies them; and the absolutely One is revealed as relatively Three.

What then are the attributes of the *First* Person? You cannot fail to remark that one thing only is said respecting him in the Nicene Creed, viz., that he is "*Maker* of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;" and that even this does not distinguish him from the second Person, of whom also it is affirmed that "by him

all things were made." The creative act, therefore, is characteristically *the Son's;* only *mediately* and through him as executive cause (δι' οὗ) is it referred to the Father as intending cause; of whom, when this is withdrawn, absolutely nothing remains to be said, except that *He is the Father, of whom is the Son.* In vain do we ask for any other mark, for any single act, for any distinctive quality, by which we may recognzie Him in our thought. Go over in your mind all that has ever been transacted in this universe from first to last: try every incident in turn of the great scheme described in Scripture; the six days' work upon the worlds, the constitution of humanity, the experiment in Eden, the separation of nations, the historic mission of the Hebrew and the Gentile races, the redeeming episode from Bethlehem to Calvary, the guiding presence of the church below and the intercession for the saints above, the final victory of the heavenly kingdom, the resurrection, the judgment, and the gift of everlasting life; inquire, which now of these things belongs specifically to the Father; and you will find there is not one; all, without exception, are attributed to the Son, and, indeed, are continually pressed upon us, as proofs of his divinity. In short, demand as you will "a sign" by which you may know the personality of the Father, lest you "confound" it to your damnation,—and "*no sign shall be given*" to you. Not one fact or phenomenon is due to his distinctive agency; and the thought of him, untraced by a line, and blanched of all colour, sinks back into an absolute blank.

To understand indeed what the early church meant by "the Father," you must proceed exactly in this direction, from a full universe to an empty one; thinning away its population of objects and events, till you reach a primeval solitude, and can ask what now is here? When you have thus undressed the whole, and fold after fold have laid aside the garb of nature, you feel that still it is not mere vacancy that is there. Dead as the silence seems, it is not dead, but only sleepeth: motionless and dark as all the

space around, it is the poised and brooding cloud, "the hiding-place of thunder," whence the lightning is to flash. Slumbering power stands before waking act; secret possibility before visible reality; the inner capacity of thought before the outward word of speech. To this dormant potency, this infinite faculty, this perfection that yet hangs back and *is* but does not *breathe*, theologians struggling with the mystery, give the name of "Father"; which serves at least to convey the idea of an anterior source of that which yet waits to be. God then, as he exists in himself ere he at all appears,—God, alone with the void,—God, as a still presence,—a starless night, a dumb immensity of intellect, is intended by the first Person in the received creed. Let now the silence be broken, let the thought burst into expression, fling out the poem of creation, evolving its idea in the drama of history, and reflecting its own image in the soul of man; then this *manifested* phase of the Divine existence is *the Son*. It matters not what the medium and form of manifestation be; physical nature, human discipline, the moral law, the course of revelation, all, as the *Word* or utterance of an otherwise *mute* Infinitude, are alike to be referred to the Son of God. The one fundamental idea by which the two personalities are meant to be distinguished is simply this; that the first is God in his primeval essence,—infinite meaning without finite indications; the second is God speaking out in phenomena and fact, and leaving his sign, wherever anything comes up from the deep of things, or merges back again.

By the help of this idea, we may resolve an apparent contradiction in the Church doctrine. While the relation which has been described,—of aboriginal silence to eventual expression,—implies that the second is *posterior to the first*, and while the very phraseology of the doctrine, borrowed as it is from the parental analogy, repeats this impression, we are nevertheless told to believe that the Son is *co-eternal* with the Father. How, it is naturally asked, can this be?

Where is the filiation, if both have ever been contemporary? what spoken word is that, which does not *follow on* the thought it speaks? I believe, however, that every thoughtful man will find himself entangled in the very same contradiction, with no happier escape. In order to conceive of the origin of things, we travel upwards into the old eternity, dropping created objects as we go, till the reckoning of the ages comes to zero, and there is no earth to swing the pendulum, no sun to show how the dial stands. We have no way of representing to ourselves the causality of God in regard to the great whole, except by imagining him antecedent to it, and thrusting it out of view, that we may contemplate Him alone. But does any one nowadays suppose the creation a real cosmical transaction? a sudden crisis, accomplished by a paroxysm of Omnipotence, with chaos before and order afterwards? Do you conceive that if you could be actually transported into the proper hour of the past, you would find as a fact the great desert of the Divine loneliness? Did he, think you, *ever* "leave himself without witness" and expression? No! of the very essence of his perfection it is, *not* to remain self-enclosed; and a manifesting universe is no caprice or repentance, but the everlasting efflux of his will. The objects and beings of nature, taken one by one, have their several dates of actual birth; but they come up into a sphere which was never empty; the eternal duration has throughout been marked by their succession; for God has never *slept*, but always *lived*. We have, therefore, on reflection, to alter our first conception. Instead of prefixing him as Cause to the whole at once, we plant him behind each in turn; we think of him as the abiding ground of all that is appointed to come and go,—the Power ever-during, ever holy, ever fresh, that all along throws out the beauty and the good which we adore as His. We have to confess that, seek him in what hiding-place of duration we may, there already is some vestige of his mind; his *Word* is *eternal as Himself*. This, then, is what is meant by the assertion that *the Son is*

co-eternal with the Father; and, so understood, it is an attempt to correct our first and false impression that God existed for a period before he acted; that his manifestation followed, after an interval, upon his essence; it denies that the difference is one of time; brings the two, in that respect, into coalescence; and for the relation of *after and before* bids us substitute that of *ever-rising phenomenon* and *ever-abiding ground.*

Is it not obvious, then, why the creeds are at a loss for anything distinctive to say about the Father? The moment *anything arises* it is *the Son*, upon whom, therefore, all the finite facts and objects which express and exemplify for us the Divine nature and Providence crowd to form and fill up his attributes. Since "without him has nothing been made that was made," everything is drawn to his name; and the Father, contemplated in himself, presents only a bare immensity,—a dark blank of infinite possibility,—the occult potency of all perfection, but the realized stage of none. He is like the vault that holds the stars, invisible in itself and made sensible to us only by them; the condition of their being, the ground on which they appear; but indescribable, except by reference to their presence and place; the sublimest of objects when traced and peopled by their diagrams; but without them, and in itself alone, equivalent to a mere blindness for our thought.

Respecting the *Third* Person in the Trinity, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible, and for my immediate purpose needless, to speak at length. One remark only will I make. The separation of this personality from the others, as not proper to be merged in them, is founded on a feeling deep and true, viz., that the human spirit is not a mere part of nature, to be flung in among the fabricated objects of the physical world, and dealt with by the common Providence that manages cosmical affairs, and engages itself to inexorable laws. We are persuaded of something diviner within us than this,—akin in freedom, in

power, in love to the Supreme Mind himself. In virtue of this prerogative, we have to be otherwise provided for, in our highest life, than the mere products of creative order; we need, not control simply to be imposed and obeyed, but *living communion*, like with like, spirit with spirit. To open this communion, to bring this help and sympathy, to breathe on the fading consciousness of our heavenly affinity, and make us One with the Father and the Son, is the function, truly of quite a special kind, reserved in the doctrine of the Church, for the Holy Ghost. What God is in himself; what He is, as manifested in the universe and history, brought to a focus in the drama of redemption; what He is in communion with our inner spirit:—these are the three points of view denoted by the "Persons" of the Trinity.

Now, with which of these three does the One object of the Unitarians' worship coincide? Both they and their opponents will at once reply,—*with the Father.* I venture to give a different answer, and to say, *with the Son.* True, we do not *name* Him so; true, we call upon Him as "the Father." But if, freeing yourself from the snare of words, you will look at what the words denote, you will correct your first impression. Examine (I would say to the Unitarian) what you mean, when you speak of God: what are the attributes, what the acts, that mark Him to your mind? Creative thought, guiding Providence, redeeming grace. And under what head are these found in the threefold scheme? They are the distinctive characters *of the second, not* of the first personality. Everything that you can say to convey a just conception of your God,—that he spread the heavens,—that he guided Israel,—that he dwelt in the Human Christ,—that he rules the unsuspecting world, and abides with the conscious heart of the church,—*all* you will discover registered among the characters of the Son. It is in *him*, therefore, among the objects of your church-neighbours' faith, that your belief is placed; and if you are to be deemed wanting in any part of the full conception,

the charge against you ought to run, that you omit the first Person, and begin with the second.

And in a great measure this charge is true. The Father, in the sense which I have endeavoured to explain, *is really absent from the Unitarian creed.* That abstract and metaphysical idea, of a silent and unmanifested God, is foreign to our practical and positive genius. We are at home with the realized and concrete; we make no advances to the Divine Mind till we are spoken to, and then are too busy with what is said to concern ourselves with the abyss where it lay asleep. We do really therefore cut off the top of the creed, and first begin upon our own truth when we reach its middle term. Unless this be well understood, the two theologies, conversing together, do but reason in the dark, and never really meet each other; their very language, familiar as it sounds, is but an unknown tongue. The word "Father," for example, has quite different senses, as used by the two. "Father" of whom and what? The Unitarian will say, "Of *men*, of us, of all creatures, the Man of Nazareth, of course, included." The Trinitarian will say, "*Of the Son*, the eternal Word, while as yet there was no man, and before all worlds." Of such Fatherhood as that, which has no reference to created beings, no illustration in the phrase "for *we* are also his offspring," and which has always been as complete as it is now, the Unitarian has no idea, and therefore no belief. This is not at all what he means, when he speaks of God's paternity. Did Trinitarians perceive this, they would be less disposed to charge us with believing in only a cold, distant, and awful God. The charge is founded on the supposition that we believe only in *their first Person*, and leave out the rest; in which case it would, indeed, be true. But tell them that the object of our belief is their *second Person*, not their first, and they will feel how false the accusation; for it is precisely around him, as the very centre and solar glory of their faith, that all their trust and reverence move, and in him that their affections burn and glow. If it is in him

that we also put our faith, though under another name, then we are at one with all Christendom in the very focus and fervour of its religious life.*

The word "Son" also, on the lips of the two theologies has quite different meanings. Speak to the Unitarian of "the Son," and he immediately thinks of Jesus of Nazareth, as the historical Christ of the Gospels; on the incidents of whose biography and the date of whose mission his mind accordingly remains fixed. With this prepossession, he is shocked to find this human figure raised to equality with "the Father"; he looks upon this as the deification of a man, and is tempted to denounce it as an idolatry. And idolatry it would be, if the Trinitarian, speaking of "the Son," intended the historical Jesus of Palestine; if, taking up that image, and starting from that point of chronology, he began to expand it till he enthroned it in the heavens, and let it pass as an equal element into the previous light of God. But his way of thought is in fact the inverse of this method. "The Son" comes before his mind, not as an historical personage at all, but as God's eternal expression of himself,—the thought he puts forth in all his works and ways; manifested through all ages by nature and history; but concentrated with unique brilliancy in the character and existence, the holy life and redeeming work of Jesus, in whom the Spirit so

* As some confirmation of the foregoing interpretation of the orthodox mode of thought, I am tempted to quote a sentence or two from the letter of an excellent and large-hearted vicar of a Northern parish, with whom I am in friendly correspondence: "I have just returned from a united prayer-meeting, at which ministers of all denominations were present, and have been struck by the way in which the prayers of all earnest and able men present point to the fact that *Trinitarianism* does supply a real need. The prayers were prayed almost entirely unto Jesus as God—Jesus as the way, the truth and the life. The Heavenly Father was, for the most part, a *great far-off Original*, of whose love they could only say that, but for Jesus Christ they could never have believed in it; and but for a belief in Jesus Christ's power, as co-equal with the Father, they would still despair of its continued and steady presence by means of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter."

dwelt without measure that he was the very "Word made flesh"; the divine perfection on the scale, and united with the incidents, of humanity. In this sense, the faith professed in "the Son" is so far from being an idolatry, that it is identical, under change of name, with the Unitarian's worship of Him who dwelt in Christ. He who is the Son in the one creed is the Father in the other; and the two are agreed, not indeed by any means *throughout*, but in that which constitutes the pith and kernel of both faiths. Let the advocates of each compare them together from this point of view, with mind open, not to words only, but to the real thoughts they contain, and with temper sensitive to sympathy rather than to divergency, and there is hope that we may yet all come into the unity of faith, and true knowledge of the Son of God.

XV.

THE NATIONAL CHURCH AS A FEDERAL UNION.

FROM different quarters, two opposite complaints are brought against the Church of England; of her insisting on too rigid a uniformity, and of her admitting too wide a latitude, of doctrinal belief and ritual usage. The facts on which these charges respectively rest, though seemingly incompatible, are really related as cause and effect. The articles, the creeds, the services, to which assent is required, contain many hundreds of propositions unverifiable in experience, and precariously inferred from inconclusive texts; propositions dealing with matters so abstruse and transcendent that concurrent acceptance of them by even a hundred persons would be possible only by giving them no thought. The enormous demand may not be too much for dependent natures accustomed to take things on trust; but less docile minds, that are under the necessity of seeing for themselves, rise against it, and either put their own meaning into the words before agreeing to them, or shelter themselves by some mental reservation. The very tightness of the bond provokes the effort and the ingenuities of relaxation. The literal sense of a formulary once abandoned, the possible substitutes deviate in all directions; a slight swerve this way or that, given at the outset to some indeterminate conception, will carry it home to a rationalistic, or a spiritual, or a sacramentarian result.

Hence the homogeneous stratum of passive acquiescence is intersected and modified by veins of active thought, injected and crossing at various angles; with the practical effect of dividing the whole mass into sections, specimens from which no one could suspect of being all quarried from the same bed. It is a highly significant fact that this issue, which attests the failure of uniformity, is by no means regarded as a scandal, except in the polemic of party with party; but is appealed to by eulogistic observers in evidence of the singular moderation of the Church, and the large scope of theological freedom provided for her members. Where else, it is asked, do you find an ecclesiastical body whose communion extends from the borders of Romanism to the "reasonable" gospel of Locke and Tillotson?

A Church which aims at uniformity and arrives at an exceptional range of variation, cannot well be either blamed or praised for both at once. Whichever be right, their co-existence is wrong. Nor is it doubtful on which side the surrender must take place. The tendency of modern feeling in favour of religious union is becoming too strong for the frail tissue of doctrinal distinctions. Every loyal Churchman finds a generous joy in receiving his communion from the hand alike of a Liddon, a Bickersteth, or a Jowett; and in pleading for his Church, delights to point to the broad fling of its Peter's net, that brings to land great fishes and small of many kinds, "and for all there are so many, yet is the net not broken." And so great is the aversion to enforce the rules of uniformity, that no bishop, if he can help it, will set the law in motion against an alleged offender in rite or doctrine; and in every suit which cannot be escaped the public sympathy is always with the accused, be he charged with a sacerdotal posture or an heretical doubt. That this set of the tide in favour of comprehension is final will hardly be disputed. And if so, the necessity is urgent of relieving the facts and feeling of the actual Church of England from condemnation by her own law; for while the Acts of Uniformity

remain, the work of the Church will be honeycombed by the canker of unveracity and self-sophistication.

But if Churchmen feel a generous pride in sheltering within their communion the contrasted apostolates of Simeon and Venn, of Pusey and Keble, of Robertson and Stanley, they are ready for a yet more capacious hospitality. These differences within their sanctuary contain in principle, and exceed in degree, the characteristics which sever the Nonconformist Christians from them and from each other. Be their seat and sphere of action internal or external, all these variations are the reproduction of an ancient and undying conflict between the priest and prophet;—between the minister of helps that carry men to God, and the organ of God's own spirit seeking and claiming men; the mediating agent that can cleanse the hindrances away, and the immediate flash and voice of conversion piercing the soul. Dependent minds that rest on outward authority, spiritual minds that meet divine things in and around their own consciousness, divide between them the chief varieties of ritual and devotion: the Anglicans consulting most for the wants of the former, the Puritans addressing themselves rather to the experience of the latter, and bringing the inward witness of religion to its ultimate isolation in the Society of Friends. If without forfeiture of fellowship the varying lines of thought can be followed within the Church of England, they can be followed beyond; and to claim communion with Wilberforce and Newton, while refusing it with Chalmers and Guthrie; to own it with Law and Fletcher, while disclaiming it with Robert Hall and Elizabeth Fry; to affirm it with Patteson, and deny it with Livingstone, is possible only by arbitrary trifling with a sacred bond.

Here, then, are two indications of unsoundness in the present position of the Church of England. The practical feeling of her members, that their party distinctions are no breach of unity, and even attune her message better to

different minds, attests the collapse of her fundamental insistence on uniformity: it is the protest of her experience against her theory. At the same time, this practical feeling, so strong against schism within, rests content with alienation from corresponding diversities without, and looks down upon them as on the factions of a foreign land. An institution with two such weaknesses is in a state of unstable equilibrium, and needs readjustment with present realities. It retains in its constitution, it embodies in its offices of worship, the assumption, long falsified by facts, that it is the sole organ of the nation's religious life; and takes no notice of the nearly equal multitude of English Christians beyond its fold, unless it be in the Litany against "false doctrine, heresy, and schism," or the collect for "preservation from false apostles." Is it surprising that this pretension, natural enough in an age when no one dreamt of a plurality of Christian communions, should now, in the face of modern facts, be found irritating and arrogant? It was never meant as a wrong, but has come to have all the effect of a wrong. In that character it has worked itself into a hurtful power in the State; for it has established an alliance between the earnest Nonconformists of the "Liberation Society" and the political Radicals, religious and non-religious, for the denationalization of the Church and the alienation of its endowment. In strong deprecation of so drastic a measure, the National Church Association suggests another mode of dealing with the problem.

In some important respects the Earl of Selborne's admirable "Defence of the Church of England" alters the whole aspect of the ecclesiastical problem. He makes it clear, by historical evidence, that the Church endowment, including tithes, arose, as much as any rent-charge bequeathed last year, by voluntary gift, and preceded all laws required for its protection; so that it stands upon the same footing with the income of Dissenters' trusts. The Parliamentary grants made by the Church Buildings Acts of 1817 and 1824 were altogether exceptional; and to these,

—the impression of which I well remember,—we owe perhaps the prevailing Nonconformist misconception that the ecclesiastical revenues are furnished, first or last, from the public exchequer. It is further shown that the civil power, in undertaking to adopt and administer certain pre-existing ecclesiastical laws, did not select for favour the Church which it thus "established," inasmuch as there was but one in existence, to which all alike belonged. By a careful and complete record of the constitutional growth of the English spiritual organization, Lord Selborne furnishes an historical defence of the Church perfect for nearly a thousand years of her development. And if her position in these latter days had no more reasonable assailants to meet than the "Liberationists," we might well say that he had made her secure: for their attack is decisively repelled. But the vindication of her past is not enough to equip her for her future. Living on into altered relations, and pressed by the exigences of a highly complex society, her constitution no longer works smoothly with the modern environment, but encounters many a disabling jar. The tone that befitted her as the sole herald of Christ to this nation is out of character with the many-voiced religion of our time, and sounds too stately for private folks unused to pray with trumpet-tongue. The quiet assumption that her spiritual fold is co-extensive with the civil existence of our people, that she has no partners in her watch over them, that they are all due to her temples and as much bound to believe her creed as to obey the laws, is an untenable survival of a social condition long obsolete. So far as appears, Lord Selborne finds nothing in this attitude that needs defence. Having justified it in the past, he leaves it as it is, and makes no abatement from the claim of uniformity. Having swept from the field the assailants immediately threatening, he retires without noticing the unguarded exposures and internal insecurities which tempted their attack and still remain.

It would be difficult to cite a more surprising triumph of

faith over fact than the expectation prevalent among the clergy, that by faithfulness and patience they can recall all wanderers, piece together again the shattered *regula fidei*, tire out the whims of Nonconformity, and bring the whole nation back into their Church. No doubt, the personal devotedness and Christian graces of a vast spiritual army may make great conquests, which might be conclusive if it had these advantages all to itself; and that the neglected wastes of a land should be so reclaimed would be a pure joy to every good man. But the level of ministerial character and service, as of zeal in the people, does not rise in one religious class while sinking in all others; the moral upheaval, wrought by large and long-gathering forces, affects the whole area together, and leaves its parts related as before. Besides, the causes of Nonconformity are not personal antipathies and humours, but grave and reasoned convictions deeply anchored in the conscience and kept steadfast by many a subsidiary hold on the immovable breakwaters of memory and reverence. Are these causes transient? Does the debate between the single and the triple rank of clerical orders show, after so many centuries, the least sign of wearing out? If Robinson and Cromwell were to visit the world again, would they find their "Independency" tired of its longevity? Has not the Eucharistic controversy which divided the Reformers reasserted its power in the dissensions of our own time? How long do you require such phenomena to last before you will admit them to have a root which you cannot pluck up? Or perhaps Dissent is an English perversity, and its causes are only local. Has then the Anglican ecclesiastical type spoken so persuasively to the universal Christian consciousness, that only our insular captiousness gives any place for other forms? On the contrary, while communions of the Continental Reformation spread over every land which the Papacy lost, and then crossed over to evangelize the western world, Anglicanism could not plant itself even in Scotland, and in foreign lands remained ever an exotic: carried

everywhere by missionaries in charge of it and colonists that loved it, few habitable places are out of reach of its voice; but from its isolated stations and its groups of English worshippers, it has not burst forth beyond its native bounds and evinced, like the Geneva gospel, a diffusive and world-subduing power.

In the face of this experience, the hope of exclusive survival for the present Church of England has little to support it but a predisposing faith. Measure also the "mountain" which this faith has to "remove;" for to cast Nonconformity "into the sea" is a gigantic feat. There are 13½ millions of Church of England people in this country: in order to draw all Christian worshippers into their fellowship they will have to absorb 12½ millions of religious exiles; and to shut up, or episcopally consecrate, upwards of 13,000 Wesleyan chapels, 2,600 Independent, 2,200 Baptist, and many other minor sects; and to deal with their attendant endowments, schools, and colleges. You keep in existence the great cause which has created these things; by what reversal of its action do you expect to destroy them? The hope that the Scotch may all turn prelatist, and the Irish peasantry, Methodists, and the French, Quakers, is not more chimerical: both perhaps to be realized about the date of the return of the Ten Tribes.

Arguments of this kind, founded on rules of probability, appeal with sufficient effect to practical men; and for them nothing is more certainly proved by historical evidence than that the aim at uniformity in theological doctrine is invariably baffled, and that latitude for varieties is a prime essential to religious unity. I am aware, however, that reasoning from experience is inoperative against the *à priori* assumptions of the dogmatic theologian; and that the historical plea may be met by his reply, "We may hitherto have been always at theological variance; but uniformity is divinely provided for, and *has to be;* and therefore it *will* be; and *here it is*, if you will only take it." It is as the assured possessor of a divine revelation, or a divine institute,

that the speaker feels authorized to answer thus: with that faultless model before him, he can test the defective conceptions of other men, and see how far down they lie, as the human inevitably must, below the superhuman. Strange that the guides of the world should lose their way by such self-deception! Doubtless, a Divine communication must tell what in itself is purely true and good; and the spirits, if such there be, into which it thus passes, must, in regard to it, be in perfect unison. But when committed to us men as its custodians, it enters finite conditions, and incurs all the liabilities of a fallible nature: shrinking with the contraction, finding room with the expansion, of the capacities it occupies. And the richer and ampler its contents may be, as befits the infinite pouring into the finite, so much the larger and the more certain must be the scope for variation, according to the dimensions of the souls it seeks, and the growth of thought through successive ages. With resources for meeting the soul in all its possibilities, it will come into contact, as history unfolds, now with this susceptibility, now with that; though still reserving its plenitude till "we all come to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Moreover, in an historical revelation it is only the primary movement that can complete itself by immediate descent of Divine into human thought. All ulterior transmission must be through the vehicle of language, whether oral between co-present men, or written for delivery from age to age. For us, all the gift of God in Christ is conveyed to our comprehension through the Scriptures; from the study and comparison of which it has to be gathered by rational analysis and combination. In this process we are at the mercy of our own finite faculties, and cannot escape their liabilities to err; and the results which emerge have no higher certainty than may attach to human inference and interpretation. When, of two equally competent students, one finds, in the records of the Primitive Church, a hierarchy of spiritual officers, and the other an equality, the

tenure of their respective convictions is exactly the same; and for a decisive verification they must wait for further evidence. Each interpreter must feel a full personal assurance of having hold on a revealed intent; but neither has any warrant for disparaging the corresponding assurance in the other, and saying "I have the mind of Christ; you have only your own." To justify such an attitude it would be needful, not only for the objective matter on which thought is directed, to be divine, but for the thinker's own procedure to be also divine. In other words, before you speak thus, you must have, or be, an infallible interpreter. Short of this, there is no foundation for any exclusive claim of divine authority on behalf of any one body of Christian institutes and doctrines as against others, and no title to denounce them as heresy or apostasy. The demeanour of assured "orthodoxy" towards "the heterodox," of the "catholic" towards the "excommunicate," is without excuse. The temper which it betrays has its root in intellectual illusion, and its fruit in moral arrogance.

Never is this tendency more misplaced than when, as a supposed "inseparable accident" of office, it infuses itself into a mind else the congenial home of all Christian graces. Nothing can sit less well on the excellent Bishop of Winchester than the air which his ecclesiastical authority has recently obliged him to assume towards Canon Wilberforce, and still more than the reasons he gives for prohibiting intercommunion with Dissenters. The Anglican Church, he tells us, stands on a totally different level from any other community of Christians, being the *res ipsissima* which Christ himself primitively instituted, and which is nowhere else to be found. It is therefore unique, Divine, the one visible body in organic union with the Head; whereas the Nonconformist organizations are mere human institutions, and can offer only what is in the gift of the members' will. The difference is that between Church and not-Church, and it is impossible for the ministers of the former to have ecclesiastical fellowship with those of the latter. This, the

bishop says, is the primary assumption on which his Church is founded. But, as we have seen, it is also the principle on which the Presbyterian Church is founded, and it is valid, as an exclusive charter, either for both, or else for neither. After what has been said it will be evident that Bishop and Presbyter must both of them step down from their oracular platform and discuss their difference humbly together, as a matter of historical criticism and scholarly exegesis.

A second principle which the Bishop finds at the base of his Church is this,—that the divine institution, being in contact with "human elements," has not been preserved, throughout its transmission, free from error, but "has run into excessive and unhealthy growths," needing the Reformation to "prune" them and restore its purity; and in England this was done with such discriminative wisdom as to reproduce exactly the primitive model. It is plain that the human liabilities let in by this second principle destroy the divine guarantee claimed in the first. If, in one age, the custodians of the Church can misconstrue its functions, and claim what does not belong to it, what is to secure us against its having gone wrong in another, the "human elements" being never absent?

Why is it not as competent for the Presbyterian to treat Episcopacy as an "unhealthy growth," as for the Bishop to apply the "pruning" knife to transubstantiation? If at the Reformation the human faculties rediscovered and re-erected the pure Church, had they nothing to do with its first organization and growth? Had they one whit less or more concern with the creation of one type of Christian community than of another? In whatever sense one of these is a "human institution," in the same sense is every other. They are all of them products of different human judgments upon the same data: in whatever sense one of them is formed in realization of a divine model, in the same sense is every other; and for any one to plant itself at a supernatural elevation above the rest, is not less out of

place than for one decipherer of a fragmentary or ambiguous inscription to assume papal airs towards differing fellow-interpreters. This common tenure of all our varying beliefs, that they are simply so many human interpretations of divine things, you can no more escape than you can jump off your own shadow. The more we learn to live together humbly and trustingly on these terms, each following out his own sanctities with the least possible chafing against those of others, the sooner shall we find the secret by-ways by which these sanctities all run into each other, so as to carry us past the subtleties of churches to the very mind of Christ.

The subjective character of an individual's theological judgments, and their consequent precariousness, is seldom denied. But, from the stress laid on the continuity and concurrent acceptance of the same beliefs, it seems to be imagined that some escape is afforded from infirmity to-day by its persistence to-morrow, and from aberration in each by assent in a crowd. This is intelligible in the Roman Catholic, who assumes a supernatural guidance of every œcumenical council by the Holy Spirit; it only needs to be rendered credible by adequate evidence. In the absence of this, and under the admission of "unhealthy growths" and impaired "purity," it is obvious that nothing is gained in security for truth, but only in scale of voting power, by removing the issue from the private chamber to the public assembly. In the *consensus ecclesiasticus* the appeal only passes from an individual to a multiform fallibility; which is apt to be a more dangerous force, in proportion as a cumulative wave of prejudice and passion driven by a sweeping *Zeitgeist* is more formidable than the ripples of individual idiosyncracy.

To one who looks on every partial variety of Christian faith as secreting within it some living seed of truth and good, the history of the Church presents no more humiliating descent than from the sublime *idea* of "Catholicity,"—the universal uplooking and uplifting of regenerate humanity

to God,—to the actual process by which the contents of the word "Catholic" have been determined. To the thought itself pure expression was given by the well-known rule, "Ut id teneamus quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est."* Yet, in the application, the *ubique* excludes the whole Eastern Church and the dominions of the Goths; the *semper* blots out the two infant centuries of Christendom, ere it had yet passed beyond the Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων; and its *ab omnibus* flings into the outer darkness innumerable swarms of excommunicants,—Donatists, Arians, Monophysites, Albigenses, Hussites,—down to the miscellaneous host through which the Reformation has re-evangelized the old world and created the new. This narrowed "universality," gained by the arts of party conflict, is all the "orbis terrarum" to which Rome appeals. Thus, by a perverse contradiction, the term *Catholic* obtains definition of its contents by a perpetual expulsion of minorities, each in turn, as it arises, driven away with the brand of anathema; and the Church's *Unity* is the residual product of a ceaseless consecration of antipathies expended upon an ever-fresh batch of outcasts. The process, Baxter would say, is a continuous "robbing Christ of some portion of his flock." The catholicity thus formed is a cumulus of execrations, and its Church is built of "stones of stumbling and rocks of offence."

The time has come to throw open mind and heart to a truer catholicity than this,—to one which shall be inclusive instead of exclusive; which shall find its sanctuary brighter and warmer for the new lights of thought and waves of feeling that flow into it; and shall rejoice to see some unawakened portion of our people caught up by an unlooked-for inrush of the "Spirit that bloweth where it listeth," and plunged into a new baptism of conversion; and shall be able to welcome the movement as a gain of fresh territory to the kingdom of Christ.

"Unity" is the secret soul of both these catholicities;

* Vincentius: "Commonitorium," cap. iii.

perverted, in the "exclusive," by the postulate of "uniformity"; perfected, in the "inclusive," by the irresistible development of "varieties." The historical crisis in which Providence handed us over from the one to the other, and so deepened and widened our spiritual problem, was the Reformation period; which opened indeed in the sixteenth century, but has not even yet delivered all its contents. It was easy to be uniform in rite and doctrine, so long as the comparatively childish and passive mind of our Christian populations was dependent on outward authority for a dictated theology, repeated by rote and incorporated in habits; nor is it wonderful that such reverence as was congenial to that stage of character settled upon the system *en bloc*, and forbade the slightest loosening of its solidity. But when, later in the European day, that system fell under the intense focus of reflective reason or conscience, slowly climbing to its meridian, its cohesion yielded; the startling magnitude of its contents became apparent, and their many-sided aspects played with distributed power upon the quickened spirits of men. The objective force of dogma is conservative, not creative: it is the influence of a constant picture, looking at you with the same face, not of a living experience through which you pass; and it is sure to give way when a reaction upon it arises from enlarged self-consciousness and penetrating thought. Hence, when the Reformation spread the Scriptures beneath the waking eye of Europe, the one overpowering impression everywhere left was, of the *inwardness* of the religion of Christ; under the influence of which sacraments were cancelled or reinterpreted, and the mediating priest superseded, and doctrine centred on the relation of the redeemed soul to God. The incongruity of the old "uniformity" superstition with this creative change long remained,—nay, still remains,—unrealized; and it went on trying its hand at all sorts of symbolical books, the multiplication and contradictions of which drew upon them the reproaches and derision of the Roman Catholics, concen-

trated in Bossuet's "Histoire des Variations des Églises Protestantes." On the principle of the "exclusive catholicity" demanding "uniformity," the book is unanswerable. The true reply is missed, till you resort to the "inclusive catholicity," and claim as a blessing what is thrown at you as a reproach. "You upbraid us with the 'variations of Protestants?' Yes, we vary, and shall vary, so long as finite faculties can be in touch with only one part at a time of the infinite truth and beauty and good: and the differences which you count against us are, in their very number, the best witnesses for us; showing at how many points the divine message finds contact with us, speaks to our thoughts, and throbs through our life."

The unity which is still possible, I do not say in spite of this variety, but as the pervading principle of this variety, is certainly not the same with the prior exclusion of Dissent. It is no longer a unity of opinion; it is now a unity of faith —*i.e.*, it is not a coincidence in the subjective judgments of a plurality of persons, but a direction of them all, in the absence of visible coincidence, upon the same infinite object, the centre of all that is holy, just, and true in itself and in every soul that owns them. It is a consciousness that we "know in part, and prophesy in part," and that, from the several stations of our geocentric position, all our views of heavenly things need a correction for parallax which we cannot make; and a faith that the seeming discordances of our trust and prayer feel their way into tune as they ascend, and harmoniously meet in the All-perfect Presence which they seek. Under these conditions, the different communions virtually say to one another, "We doubtless *divide* the truth among us, as it is given us, and as we severally need and can appropriate it,—you, this part; and we, that." This is a relation which admits of profound sympathy and the most beneficent co-operation. But when one of the communion quits the level pavement of the common worship, and mounts its high-altar steps, and says to the rest, "You doubtless have each a part of the

truth, much mixed; but we have the whole of it, quite pure;" this is a self-assertion of "legitimacy," a brandishing of the "white flag," which puts an end to every "constitutional" guarantee, and gives warning that the only choice is between deposition and absolutism. What hope can you have of coming to an understanding with another, when you begin by requiring entire surrender on his part? In spite of some discouraging symptoms, I cannot believe that the existing Church of England will consent to be the victim of such obscurantism. And if she will take the only tenable ground, foregoing her tacitly assumed patent of infallibility, and accepting her Protestant parallelism with other Christian communions in this country, her difficulties may be removed, and a prospect opened to her of a real hegemony far more dignified and far better secured than will ever be conceded to her as the ecclesiastical heir of the Apostles.

The adjustments needed for this end have been long delayed. In a certain theoretic sense they were due at the Restoration; for then, more definitely than at any other date, was the crisis of the English struggle between the exclusive and the inclusive catholicity. For upwards of 110 years, the composite forces which made up the old religious uniformity had lost their equilibrium, and been in strife together,—always, however, with a view to a continued ecclesiastical unity, though not the same unity as before. The ideal of what the English Church should be was far from being identical in the different parties to the projected settlement. The Anglicans wanted to save more from the past; the Puritans, to lighten the sacred ark for its future course by more freely throwing over its excessive burden of rite and dogma. The quarrel was about the form which should be given to the *One Church* in England, and no one demanded liberty for the co-existence of several. Whether there was ever, during that intense agitation of religious minds, any possible *via media* which, had it only been found, might have realized the contemplated end, is very

doubtful. The influence of the continental divines and controversies, the conflicting tendencies of the Scotch and English religious mind, the exasperation of ecclesiastical by political disaffection, combined to produce irreconcilable fanaticisms, and to silence the counsels of moderation. At all events, the course pursued on the return of Charles II. turned the scale, and by violently enforcing uniformity rendered it for ever impossible. The powers of ecclesiastical cohesion were overstrained; the pressure upon consciences was intolerable; the English Christendom was broken in pieces, and from that moment took its separate lines of development, and bespoke distinct centres of communion. Had there been at the head of affairs in 1662 a statesman of large and calm wisdom,—a Sir Matthew Hale instead of a Clarendon,—he might have seen that the moment had arrived for substituting the inclusive Catholicism for the exclusive; and, instead of repeating the criminal folly of persecuting exemplary citizens and trusted pastors of the people, might have allowed the English Christendom to organize itself upon its separate axes, each traced from the same invisible Head, and supporting by their attraction similar spheres of realized righteousness. Had this been done, we should long ago have had that best economy of spiritual energy in which each worshipper's piety is brightest, because in its own natural home, and yet most open to fellow-feeling with the several comrades, who, marching by converging roads, meet him on the same battlefield against the hosts of sin and darkness. Late though it be for a duty so great and simple, nevertheless, if we "have faith as a grain of mustard seed," it may yet be done. We cannot, and we need not, dissolve or change our separate communions, or in any way weaken our loyalty to them. But why not cluster them all together, as confederated members of a common country,—a divine commonwealth, with plenty of human work claiming the heart and hand of all? That is the purpose of the legislative measure which I now propose to explain and recommend.

To guard the reader against certain natural but erroneous preconceptions, I will first refer to some ends, often in favour with Church reformers, at which the present scheme does *not* aim.

Its object is not to "liberalize" the existing Church of England, or widen the entrance to its ministry, by reducing its formularies to the expression of "what is common to all Christians." Its supporters are aware how little congenial to the spirit of this age would be such an imitation of the attempts at "comprehension" made by Tillotson and revived by Blackburne. They have no faith in a latitudinarian neutrality and silence towards articles of belief blended in many minds with the very essence of devotion; and therefore no desire to limit in any way the doctrinal and ritual terms which the members of a religious body may deem indispensable to their communion. The proposed enactment does not prescribe any alteration in this respect. True, it repeals the Acts of Uniformity which at present define and enforce for the Established Church the contents of its faith and the conditions of its worship. But the legal control thus relinquished by the State is delivered into the hands of the Episcopal Church itself, which, in the exercise of new constitutional powers, may either retain its formularies as they are, or from time to time modify them as may seem best. Complete freedom, whether for conservation or for reform, is thus secured. But, lest that freedom, in its early exercise, should unfairly press upon the existing clergy, it is provided that they shall not be bound to anything beyond the engagements into which they entered at their ordination. By this course Parliament is not asked, as it was in the old "comprehension Bills," for the "doctrinal legislation" from which political men shrink, and for which, indeed, a House of Commons containing samples of all beliefs and non-beliefs is no fit assembly. By discharging from the Statute-book the one great example of such legislations, the law-makers' aversion to it is finally satisfied. They take leave of it for ever.

Again, it is *not* proposed to throw preferment to benefices open to non-Episcopalians, or to confer a legal right upon either them or the clergy to occupy each other's pulpits, irrespectively of the rules of their own communions. In these respects the constitution of the Episcopal Church would remain exactly as it is, until its own representative Synod thought fit to change it.

Again, it is *not* proposed to disendow the Church, or to divert its estates and revenues to purposes alien from their intended destination. On the contrary, the main design, in regard to temporalities, is to save the whole of that endowment for the united Christian culture of the English people, and in doing so to make no change in its mode of application except such as, on the legal principal of *cy près*, the courts of justice constantly prescribe, in order to keep alive the essence of an old intent under new and unforeseen conditions. The ancient donors (Saxon and Norman) whose voluntary gifts instituted that endowment, lived and died in presence of one only Church as their total local Christendom, and could exercise no preference among its future and unsuspected differentiations; and no one can say how they would have been affected towards the several Reformation developments, had they lived on to experience them. Their endowment then stands in an impartial relation to the religious growths of later times, and must be taken as conferred upon the entire Christendom of England: and on that earlier estate, formed prior to the division of one communion into several, bodies of Puritan descent or character have as legitimate a claim as the Anglican. That they were banished from all participation in it, and otherwise treated as outcasts, must in this view be regarded as a wrongful forfeiture: none the less, that they themselves, had they been in the ascendant, would probably have dealt out the same measure to the Anglicans. This wrong the present scheme proposes, not indeed to *repair*, but simply to *terminate*, by now at last admitting the excluded to their just share. The process is

analogous to the removal of an attainder, and reversion of a sequestered estate.

This claim, however, applies not to the whole of the endowment, but only to such portion as grew up while the Church was regarded as co-extensive with the nation. From the moment when, by the Act of Uniformity, it ceased to embrace the whole of the English Christendom and identified itself exclusively with the Episcopalian branch of it, all gifts and bequests made to it, as so defined, must have been intended for it in its legal form, as distinguished from all varieties of Nonconformity. Whatever increment the Church property has received by gift or bequest since 1662, constitutes a special endowment of the Episcopalian Church.

By this arrangement the position is made good, that *no diversion* is contemplated from the intended purpose of the ecclesiastical estate.

Once more, it is *not* proposed to place the present Church of England, while still subject to the restrictions of the Acts of Uniformity, at the disposal, parish by parish, of popularly elected *parochial boards*, which shall have a voice in appointing the clergy, shall regulate the services, and control the building and the funds, and even, perhaps, (as has been suggested), hand over the church to any religious body that can contrive to get a majority of votes. This method is founded on the supposed legal fiction (which Earl Selborne shows to have no existence) that every English subject is "constitutionally" a member of the Church of England. If such a principle was ever known to the law, it either meant no more than that the church was open to any one who chose to seek its services, and the churchyard accessible for the burial of any deceased parishioner; or it was the expression of an enforced conformity, recognizing no man as a citizen unless he were a conforming Churchman. In any case it has become, under present social conditions, such an empty unreality as to bring to certain ruin any construction built upon it. So

long as the nation and the Church were co-extensive, the parochial organization naturally served for both civil and ecclesiastical purposes: the rates voted by the ratepayers went in part to secular uses—*e.g.*, to relieve the poor; in part to ecclesiastical—*e.g.*, to repair and cleanse the church, to provide its furniture, to keep the churchyard; and those who subscribed the common fund had rightly the election of the churchwarden to administer it. But with the extension of Nonconformity arose resistance to the application of public rates to Church purposes, and the compulsory levy of them ceased; and it is not easy to see with what justice those who have thrown off the obligation can now be re-instated in the corresponding power, not without enormous increase of its range. The parochial Nonconformists, having washed their hands of their local ecclesiastical responsibilities, and procured legal recognition of their exemption, it is too late to invite them back again, in order to overpower the *bonâ fide* Churchmen in the control of their religious services and interior affairs. It is difficult to conceive of a more flagrant and irritating wrong than the drowning of the habitual worshippers' voice in regard to matters of such deep interest to them, by bringing to the poll a mixed multitude, not, only of Dissenters, but of the non-religious who have nothing to guide them but anti-clerical antipathies. Having once entered on the policy of severing the *civil* functions of the parochial area from the ecclesiastical, we must go through with it, and surrender the administration of the offices and resources of its Episcopal church to the real members, on whom the whole local charges are already thrown.

The injustice of this parochial democracy has the less excuse on account of its obvious inefficiency. So long as the Acts of Uniformity are left on the Statute-book, and so long as advowsons and rights of presentation remain, the bishops, the churchwardens, the patrons, are bound by restrictions and invested with privileges which leave no appreciable latitude for change in the services, the personal

appointments, or the finances; nor could any important proposal be made which did not trench on some existing right or obligation. The favourite escape from this difficulty—viz., by appeal to the bishop,—does not seem well-advised; for what can be more dangerous in itself and more embarrassing to him than to vest in him *a dispensing power* over the law which it is his office at once to obey and to administer?

On this dispensing power the Parochial reformers apparently rely for that "*gradual relaxation* of the Act of Uniformity," which they prefer to its repeal; for how can a law still in force be "gradually relaxed," unless by judicial suspense of its provisions or connivance at its violation? When the new rights claimed for the Parochial Board clash with some clause in the statute of 1662, are they to have the effect (*non obstante Episcopo*) of so far annulling it? Is it thus to become possible for a parish of Broad-church sympathies to drop the recital of the creeds? or, if of Puritan proclivities, to remove the liturgy in favour of free prayer? or, if afraid of priestly pretensions, to dispense with "Holy orders" in the incumbent? or, if sacerdotally-minded, to set up the confessional? or, if prevailingly secularist, to secure the living and its pulpit for a lecture against all religions? To enter upon a process of this kind would be to whittle away the Act of Uniformity bit by bit; to destroy the self-identity of the Institution to which it gives shape; and to substitute for it, not any larger unity, but a chaos of conflicting tendencies, comparable only with the mediæval feuds and factions of the Italian cities. Even if the veto of a resolute bishop here and there availed to baffle the innovators and uphold the historic law, it would be at the cost of a struggle hardly less deplorable. To set popular feeling upon the strain, pulling in all directions,—this way in one parish, that way in another,—upon an iron-bound Church that cannot yield, can produce nothing but an angry and fruitless expenditure of strength.

If the new parochial action were *not* made conditional

on episcopal consent, an absolute power would rest in every parish of repealing within its bounds whatever part it pleased of the Act of Uniformity. Or rather, as every unconditional right created cancels, *eo ipso*, the prior restriction which excluded it, that Act collapses on the day which legalizes the Parochial Boards. Which is better, this indirect repeal, which breaks up an old order into the hopeless disorder of fourteen thousand autonomous councils, each moving on its own line of variation, or a direct repeal by a legislature careful not to part with the old order without providing for a systematic organization of the new?

For these reasons the proposed Bill freely surrenders the whole of the parish and district churches and chapels of ease to the Episcopalians, and provides for an entire separation of the ecclesiastical management from the functions of the parochial civil administration. This will assimilate the smallest ecclesiastical area,—the single church with its worshippers,—to all the larger circles within which it is embraced, and in which there is no confusing mixture of secular with spiritual functions. The whole series will be ecclesiastical. The rector's or vicar's own real flock will constitute the primary unit of the Episcopalian Church system. A number of these will form the constituents of a rural deanery; and by referring each larger term, as it arises, to a higher group, we arrive at the archdeaconry, the diocese, the province; each with its own representative body, and all culminating in a General Synod, with full powers to determine and modify at discretion the whole system of Church order and life.

Having cleared the proposals of the National Church Association from the cognate aims which they do not include, I proceed to their positive contents.

The first projected step in the plan of action, the prior condition of its ulterior and chief aim, shall be described by the Earl of Selborne, in spite of the easy indifference with which he dismisses it. "Disestablishment," he

says, "without disendowment, a renunciation by the State of such powers of control as are involved in Establishment, without a total or large secularization of the endowments of the Church, is a measure which nobody now proposes, and which I therefore need not consider."* The reason why "nobody now proposes" to separate disestablishment from disendowment is, that under the discipline of the Liberation Society everybody has been taught, if not to fuse the two ideas into one mass, at least to couple them like chain-shot that must always fly together. The popular Nonconformist conception of the Church of England as a State-created or State-selected and State-endowed institution, set up by profane intrusion of secular power into spiritual relations, mixes up historical error and illusory theory into one huge prejudice, in which accurate distinction is lost: with the effect of misdirecting all practical effort at reform upon the sweeping project now struck down by Lord Selborne's assault. To him, doubtless, it is no unwelcome thing, at his point of view, to give the *coup de grace*, by an easy stroke at a single neck, to both disestablishment and disendowment together, and to leave his beloved Anglican Church undisturbed in her lonely ascendency. But those who find no warrant for that ascendency cannot accept it as the sole surviving alternative, and on looking out for another may perhaps alight upon it by the discriminative act of approving disestablishment and rejecting disendowment. This will become plain, if we fix exactly the meaning of the chief words.

A Church is not established, so long as the rules of its constitution and procedure are voluntary, framed, accepted, and administered by its members under stipulated sanctions. The engagements involved in membership are simply matters of *private contract.*

A Church becomes established, whenever the rules of its constitution and procedure,—in other words, its ecclesiastical laws,—are taken up into the civil law of a State; before

* "Defence of the Church of England," p. 72.

the judicature of which alleged violations of them are brought as *public offences*, punishable by enacted penalties.

Where the Statute-book is thus enlarged by incorporating a body of ecclesiastical law, the judicial system for interpreting that law and trying alleged transgressions of it, is naturally composed in part of clerical, in part of lay persons who have made a special study of this branch of law. The tribunals for causes ecclesiastical, which, under a purely voluntary constitution, would be mere committees of arbitration, become ecclesiastical courts; the bishops engaged in them become judges; and their lay assessors are selected from a class of experts in ecclesiastical law. By the theory of the English Constitution, it is the Crown that presides in every court of justice in the land; and in virtue of the division of our whole *corpus juris* into the *purely civil* and the *also ecclesiastical*, the royal supremacy is usually named under the double expression, "Over all persons and causes civil and ecclesiastical," in order to carry the same sovereign presence, as sole fount of justice, on to the bench of both courts temporal and courts ecclesiastical. It is really, however, the same function, and that *purely civil*, which the Crown exercises, and the same law, and that *also civil*, which the Crown interprets and declares, in both instances; for no law ecclesiastical has any entry there unless it has been made a *part of the civil law*;—in that capacity alone does it possess validity. From these constitutional facts the following consequences flow:—

(1) To repeal the Acts of Uniformity is to throw out of the Statute-book its portion of adopted ecclesiastical law; for any residue that may be found in other Acts is merely dependent and subsidiary, and must follow the fate of the constitutive enactments. That repeal, therefore, *is disestablishment*—the farewell act in which Parliament takes leave of the rather wayward spiritual ward it has controlled so long, and, trusting at last her adult discretion, says, "Go in peace!"

(2) The law of the Church disappearing from the code,

there is no further need of a special judicature for interpreting it, and the ecclesiastical courts drop of themselves. The Episcopalian body, like the Presbyterian body in Scotland, will have its own provisions for deciding on alleged breaches of its rules, and visiting them with spiritual censures and other liabilities voluntarily accepted in the contract of membership. But if the accused deems himself wrongly judged, and able to show either that his act, as charged, is compatible with his contract, or that the penalty imposed is a temporal injury beyond its reach, he can seek redress in the civil courts which enforce the observance of all express engagements. Thus, the supremacy of the Crown remains, in the last resort, the security for justice to the accused, no less in a disestablished Church than in an established; only, by the merging of *ecclesiastical causes* as a separate category, it is the *civil shield* which it spreads over all who need redress.

(3) It is too obvious to need more than simple statement that, when once the State law has divested itself of Church law, and therefore leaves the Episcopalian communion on the same legal footing with other branches of the English Christendom, there is no longer any plea for

(*a*) Vesting the presentation to benefices, or the nomination to bishoprics, &c., in the Crown, or any great officers acting in a public capacity as Ministers of State; or

(*b*) Assigning to the bishops baronial rank and legislative functions in the House of Lords.

On first addressing myself to the Church problem, I was prepossessed by a strong aversion to the idea of "disestablishment;" having long perceived how unsound was the Nonconformist theory of the State, yet not freed myself from its confused conception of "disestablishment." When obliged to look closely into the meaning of the word, I was surprised to find that the features just enumerated were its whole contents; and I asked myself, as I now would ask

my reader, whether there is in it anything alarming; nay, whether it would not open a far better future for a living and growing organ of religious power than the continuance (were that possible) of its present law-bound existence. I do not suppose that any one is really content with things exactly as they are, or feels that, without straining at the present restrictions, there is room enough for such flexible movement and diversity of operations as would turn to full account the spiritual gifts of the Episcopalian communion. The signs of restiveness under too tight an organism are everywhere manifest, and are a plain providential call to larger life. As it is, the leaders in clerical energy cannot enter upon that larger life without Parliamentary leave; and if they carry their petition to St. Stephen's, what reception have they to expect? Political men of all parties, it is notorious, are irreconcilably averse to any further parliamentary meddling with doctrine and ritual, and will not listen to proposals for mending the law of the Church: they wait for the great crisis which, as they expect, will rid them of the whole business; and of this crisis they have as yet no notion, except from the Liberationist programme of disestablishment and disendowment together. From so rash a proceeding Conservative and moderate politicians no doubt shrink. The reason they do so is, that they dread and disapprove the secularization of the Church endowment. But even they share the feeling that a chamber like the House of Commons, composed indifferently of Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, Nonconformists of all varieties, Jews, and persons disowning all interest in religion, is a body not qualified to undertake a revision of the creeds, ritual, and liturgy of a Church embracing Episcopalians alone. They naturally say: "You must not depend upon us any longer for this sort of work, for which many of us are quite unfit. Set your own spiritual home in order; *the Church must reform itself.*" Excellent advice, were it not a little cruel; for the Church simply *cannot* reform itself by even the smallest change of constitution, so

long as Parliament holds it within the grasp of its present law. The very object of the enactment now proposed is to remove that inability. When passed, it would be precisely an *enabling Act, empowering the present Church to reform itself* without foreign interference; and till it is passed, the well-meant advice is but a poor mockery. The measure therefore indisputably commends itself by the following important advantages:—

(1) It meets and finally satisfies the settled political aversion to further ecclesiastical legislation, by ridding the Statute-book of all Church law.

(2) In doing so, it satisfies all the Liberationist objections to State intermeddling in matters of religion, and removes that stumbling-block out of the way.

(3) It sets the Episcopalian Church free to develop its own life, and modify its message and its methods as new conditions may recommend.

(4) It effects these ends without diverting the Church endowment from its religious purpose.

I ask, with some confidence, whether in this form the dreaded "disestablishment" would not plainly be an emergence into fresher inspirations and more fruitful labour? The reaction indeed into an "unchartered liberty" might easily be *too* strong, were it not for one restraining limit which yet remains to be explained. The immediate effect of a *bare* repeal of the Acts of Uniformity would be, not to free the whole body of Churchmen for orderly self-government, but simply to leave the clergy free to follow their own individual and arbitrary wills, and fling the services and ritual usages into confusion and uncertainty. Parliament, in relinquishing its own control, is bound to substitute some other safeguard against this. The mode of doing so is obvious. As the control surrendered is that of a *lay legislature*, so is the control substituted properly found in a preponderant *lay representation*, both in the synodical constituencies and in the synods themselves. Whether the proposed ratio of two laymen to one clerk, is the best pos-

sible, may of course, like all such quantitative questions, be open to doubt. But the provision of some such proportion has been found, I am assured, to work admirably in the Irish Disestablished Church.

The powers of ecclesiastical self-government vested in the General Synod cannot of course touch any one's civil rights, and cannot therefore take or tax his property. Hence the autonomy of the disestablished Church would be limited by the reservation of the patrons' title to present to vacant livings. Their rights, possessing a negotiable value legalized for centuries, cannot be cancelled uncompensated. If they are to be bought off, it must either be by Parliament before dis-establishment, or by the General Synod after;—in the former case, at the cost of the nation; in the latter, of the Church: not the former, so as to throw the burden as much on outsiders as on members of the benefited community, but on the latter, when acting on its own behalf. If, then, the Synod deems it important to substitute election, or other mode of clerical appointment, for presentation, it will have to redeem the benefice from the patron. In the scheme, power is accordingly reserved to give him notice that his right will be taken up at its value, the amount being determined by an arbitrator acceptable to both parties. The episcopal Church, thus empowered to obtain possession of all appointments and regulate the mode of making them, would occupy a stately position side by side with the co-ordinated voluntary bodies, and nobly tax their energies to keep in line with it on the march against all actual and threatening spiritual ills.

Is it too much to expect that the community which thus gains its liberty of self-disposal shall recognize, as co-members of a common Christendom and partners in the evangelization of a common country, the other voluntary religious bodies which long have been so, which actually are so, and which will remain so, whether it chooses to greet the fact or to pass it by on the other side? The

time, I trust, is past for theoretic fictions to sustain a narrow-hearted alienation between conterminous provinces of the same spiritual commonwealth. At all events, the impartial *State*, in preparing a field for their equal liberties and labours, must credit them with a true understanding of their mutual relations, and make provision for not only the passive equilibrium of justice, but the active and growing co-operation of affection. Hence it is proposed that any Christian denomination at present counted as Dissenting shall be co-ordinated with the Episcopalian as another branch of the Church of England, on showing its hold on the English religious life by a history of one hundred years and a magnitude of two hundred congregations, and also its adequate provision for education and character in its ministers. And it is to the bodies fulfilling these conditions that a proportionate participation is extended in the benefits of the Church endowment prior to 1662; and is left applicable to any religious purpose approved by the recipients. Of the funds thus nationalized, a certain portion is reserved for religious and moral objects prosecuted in common by all or some of the united confederates: so that, as soon as they begin to draw together and consolidate their scattered efforts, there shall be help awaiting them for expansion over a wide field. The remaining portion will be open to distribution among the several associated bodies in their distinct lines of Christian life and action. It is reasonable to believe that, in subdivided sects seeking this admission, the minor varieties, already tired of their isolation, would undergo a rapid and welcome fusion, and by incorporation in a nobler organism be saved from disintegration. The tendency to gravitate towards each other is more manifest every day in the different components of both the Wesleyan and Presbyterian communities. The confederated group of communions thus constituted would take the name no longer monopolized by the Episcopalian body, and be the "Church of England" in its enlarged sense. They would have their collective representation in

a "National Church Assembly," for the combined guardianship of Christian principles and prosecution of common enterprises of righteous zeal and piety.

In proposing to substitute a Federal for a competitive relation among religious bodies, we certainly cannot appeal to experience for support, or hope to convince those whose belief is limited to realized facts. The experiment has never yet been tried of expressly combining in religion the two loyalties,—that engendered by wide fellowship in a common warfare for a common cause, and that which binds us with closer and tenderer devotion to the inner household of our own domestic faith. It would have been tried long ago but for the prepossessing delusion that they had no right to co-exist, that spiritual union must be limited to our own "elect," and that all attachment beyond was an attempted "fellowship of Christ with Belial," and that whoever gave way to reverence and affection for misbelievers of other communions was a traitor to his Lord. But now, in spite of this miserable hindrance, the human heart,—rather, the Divine Spirit (here both are one),—has shamed this false antagonism away, and made it an indisputable fact that, besides our interior faithfulness to our own class of disciples, we are drawn by irresistible attraction to strong and saintly souls, how far soever from our borders, and look up to them as true children of God, and long to fill up with them what remains of the sufferings of Christ. Once touched by the two enthusiasms, we learn that they help instead of hindering each other, like the kindred love of *country* and of *home*, and gain assurance that both are harmoniously embraced in the love of God. It is impossible to doubt that the blending affections are higher and more sacred than the dissevering thoughts. The piety of a George Herbert, a Baxter, a Fénelon, a Wesley, a Robert Hall, a Barbauld, an Elizabeth Fry, was nurtured in different schools; yet breaks into prayer and song and life in tones and labours that subdue and humble us all. If the text be true, "By their fruits ye shall know them," have we no

common fellowship with these, or they with one another? Owning the same Head to begin with, and brought to the same heart and will when the inward working declares itself at last, must they and we excommunicate each other, and say, "the essential is not there," because we join the beginning and the end by the links of differing chains? Shall it always be that the sweet singers who are grouped together in our hymn-books, like a choir of angels, to lead and lift our suppliant strains, must shrink from the kiss of fellowship in this life, and say, "Ah, no! the seal is not upon his forehead?" May we not rather trust the blind man's answer, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes?" Surely the least that we can ask for these uniting sympathies is, that they should lead us to a Federal confraternity of labour for the common products of Christian character and the missionary conquests of the kingdom of God.

For such federal union nothing more is, in the first instance, needed or possible than simply to open the way for it, construct its organism, and provide the means of development, without either forcing it upon the unprepared, or prematurely attempting to define its work. It is enough, at the outset, to place the several constituent communities side by side on equal terms of recognition, and without an excuse remaining for jealousy or alienation. This change of attitude, the assumption of a fraternal instead of an outlawed position, cannot but abate the inducement to dwell upon differences, and must reveal all sorts of new accordances and possibilities of co-operation. It is difficult to limit the economy of moral labour, and the increase of spiritual efficiency for social ends, which might arise from partnership in effort now frittered away in sub-division. As it is, every "little Bethel" and new mission-house added to the half-dozen within a quarter of a mile, attempts, not only to preach the gospel to its scanty flock, but to supply the whole set of concomitant institutions,—Sunday schools,

provident clubs, temperance societies, library, reading, and lecture rooms; even concerts and amusement; so as to concentrate the whole contents of life beyond the labour-hours upon the favourite spot. Hence a fortuitous multiplication of petty agencies on an inconsiderable area, feebly managed, crossing one another, struggling with difficulties, and narrow alike in spirit and in means. The men and women really fitted for the work of an evangelist are few, and when found are capable of large action on an ample field. And as soon as the possibilities of religious co-operation are opened up, the moral organization of our large towns will assume another aspect. The army of worthy but poor creatures will be disbanded: the "troupe d'élite" of fellow-workers who really burn with the apostolic fire, will be singled out and entrusted with a field proportionate to their power; and will be furnished, in place of hole-and-corner nests of dingy piety and indebted benevolence, with stations and places of assembly where worship can have some aspect of dignity and sweetness, and knowledge and art can spread out their resources, and the prophets of the perfect life can have around them an outer aspect of it as bright and pure as its spirit within. Instead of defeating one another fifty times over by conflicting attempts at Christianizing our unreclaimed population on the same area, we shall join resources for a great campaign and carry the banner of the Cross to victory. The extent to which home missions, foreign missions, movements in check of the utter secularization of life, and in promotion of sanatory, educational, industrial, and moral improvement, might be consolidated without trenching on the sacred reserves of any Christian conscience, is incalculable, and would widen its bounds with every fresh experience. The great need is to take heart of faith, and to begin. Once let the separatist habit be broken through, and the divided positions of thought be bridged by a covering feeling which takes the terror from the gulf between; let the usage become familiar, of open counsel on a serious

duty, and for an earnest end; and the mere frequency of face-to-face conference in such a mood will imperceptibly smooth the way to closer relations.

"A long experience," says Keble, "confirms me in thinking that where persons oppose each other honestly, however decidedly, in belief or opinion, the cause of truth, which commonly lies between both, and of charity, without which even truth itself can scarcely be maintained truly, is greatly served by the softening and enlightening necessity of personal and official communion." (Keble's Letters.)

Does the reader pronounce such co-operative labour of separate religious communions impossible? I pray him to ponder the following record of experience, from a letter of my late friend, Rev. W. H. Channing, to his mother, describing his attempt to find for himself a field for a mission to the poor in the most neglected part of the city of New York:—

"I found the city was under the care, from one end to the other, of a board of visitors called 'tract distributors,' whose object was to teach the gospel to the poor. Here were a sort of ministers at large, occupying as good husbandmen this desolate wilderness, as I had been led to expect to find it. I have been gradually coming more and more to appreciate this truly sublime effort. Let me give you some idea of the extent of it. The city is divided into portions, each ward being one, over which there is a superintendent, who is one of the most influential men in the ward for piety and talent. Under him there is an agent, who receives a salary, and devotes his whole time to the work of directing religious effort in his ward. The wards are divided into districts, in each of which there is a visitor, whose duty it is to visit all the families under his charge at least once a month, and oftener if possible, bring them to prayer meetings, which are held in the district, direct them to churches, reform them, see that their children are in Sunday-schools and day-schools, and help them in the way of charity. These visitors have monthly meetings to report progress and give and receive advice. The agents meet weekly to animate each other in the work. There are now sixteen agents to

twelve thousand visitors. The expenses of the work are one hundred dollars a month. They intend this year (1837) to increase the number of visitors to two thousand, and their plan, when completed, contemplates establishing a mission church in each ward. Here is the plan. What think you? I challenge Christendom for the last 1800 years to show such a sublime plan of Christian philanthropy. It is sublime, and it is not theory, remember, but for the most part in effective operation. To complete the picture, let me tell you that every denomination in the city (except the Unitarians, who are excluded) go hand in hand in this grand mission. In addition there are six Presbyterian free churches, four Episcopal, two Baptist, twenty Methodist churches, which are always free, and four Roman Catholic." *

If this could arise in America through the spontaneous attraction of perfectly unrelated churches towards the same modes of Christian work, how can we doubt its readier possibility here, in a group of communions expressly confederated in consideration of their common origin and in hope of nearer approximation? Our national history throws all the advantage on our side; for it is a law of all long-lived nations that the feuds of history die out, while its deeper unities, after hibernating through some "winter of discontent," wake with the returning sunshine and assert their life again.

The doubt whether separate Christian bodies are susceptible of federal union derives apparent support from a rule which is laid down in relation to States, as conditioning the successful working of a federal adjustment. Mr. Albert Dicey, in his masterly book on "Home Rule," says that

"If such a government is to be worked with anything like success, there must exist among the citizens of the confederacy a spirit of genuine loyalty to the union. The 'unitarian' feeling of the people must distinctly predominate over the sentiment in favour of 'State rights.' Unless the national senti-

* "Memoir of William Henry Channing," by Octavius Brooks Frothingham, pp. 131–132.

ment predominate, the federation will go to pieces at any of those crises when the interest or wishes of any of the States conflict with the interests or wishes of the union."*

It must be admitted that our cluster of religious bodies in England does not fulfil this condition. The attachment of the Anglican, the Presbyterian, &c., to his own spiritual home is far deeper than the sympathies which draw each to the whole. The rule, however affirms, not a pre-requisite to the institution of a confederacy, but a condition of its permanence when instituted. And it is in the very process of its formation and in the struggles against the perils of its infancy, that the central loyalty has its genesis and gains its tension. During the war of Independence and the earlier years of the Union, the weakness of the federal bond in the American States was the source of the most serious difficulties. But as the lapse of time gave them a national history, it kindled a growing patriotism finally ascendent in the Civil War. The analogy therefore is full of encouragement. Similar relations introduced among religious communities, at present separate, would call into play a corresponding development of blending affection, which only waits for its opportunity. Give it the intensifying conditions, and those who are now Churchmen first and Christians afterwards will be turned into Christians first and Churchmen afterwards.

For some of our most devoted reformers, the federal principle is unsatisfying, because it does not give *unity*, but only *union;* and that is not enough for their eager aspirations. They dislike the spectacle of our multiform Christianity, and will not recognize it as a fact that has any right to be; and think that by admitting its component parts to a defined status, with annexed rights and duties, we virtually stereotype them, and arrest their merited break-up. Instead of condescending to notice them, we ought to pass them by, and go straight to "the people" and tell them that the

* "England's Case against Home Rule," pp. 178, 179.

Nation *is* the Church, and may do as it likes with all ecclesiastical institutions: its will is the Church's will, and as soon as the Nation knows its own mind, the Church will have got its unity.

Of this doctrine no more need here be said than may suffice to relieve its pressure upon the proposed federation. For that purpose a single remark appears enough. In framing measures to fit the changed conditions of English society, you must look at that society as it is, and not as you would prefer it to be. The clerical habit of treating our national history as flowing on complete in its channel within the Church banks, and regarding Nonconformist phenomena, not as tributaries to its fertilizing course, but as back-waters from ugly floods, which only desolate and hide the fair fields, and blot out the whole landscape, till they drain away and restore the swamp to tillage, betrays itself in this theory scarcely less than in its opposite, the high Anglican. It involves an ignoring of actual English life on such a scale as to render futile, if not ruinous, any legislation founded on it. Wish as you may, say what you will, the religious sects of England are characteristic facts, belonging to the inmost life of nearly half its people, and destined still in the future, as in the past, to make up for them the best part of the history which they know. Other classification of what interests and concerns them will be frustrated in effect by running counter to the lines of their intelligence and feeling. The reformer cannot with impunity disregard the natural planes of cleavage in the material with which he deals. If he wants to divide it, it is there alone that it will yield; if to integrate it, let him lay the laminæ parallel together, and maybe they will cohere and crystallize; but if he leaves them lying at all sorts of angles, they will but cross and cut. How it can be wise to suppress a class of conspicuous facts, already recorded in the Registrar-General's reports and made the ground of many a legislative act, it is difficult to conceive. And not less so, how the recognition of them as heads of arrange-

ment for a federal union can tend to "stereotype" them as they are; for neither change in them, nor even absorption of any one into another, would remove them from the union, or expose them in it to the slightest disadvantage; while their proximate relations within it would vastly increase the probability of their merging in an ultimate unity."

For the National Church of England thus composed nothing has been asked from the total Church endowment, except a proportionate participation by its new members in the revenues of the pre-Restoration estate. All the subsequent acquisitions, the whole of the parish and district churches with their glebes, all the residences, rectories, vicarages, decanal and episcopal houses, are assigned to the Episcopalians as at present. There remain the cathedrals. Are they to be given up unreservedly to any one particular branch of our Christendom? A mere glance at one of those stately piles rebukes so poor a thought. Taking us back to a date beside which our oldest surviving divisions are modern, conventual rather than parochial in their resources and character, founded or enriched by kings and bishops of renown, containing the tombs of crusaders and pilgrims, of statesmen and judges, of heroes, philosophers, poets, saints, that crowd the roll of our long annals, they are unique as monuments of our entire historic life, and can be the monopoly of no select communion. Their administration must be as large as their structure, and consecrate them anew as temples of unity. Accordingly, it is proposed to vest their estates in "National Church Commissioners," and to make the capitular body of mixed composition, including three members from the non-episcopal confederates. This provision itself bears fitting witness to the change from the exclusive to the inclusive catholicity. And the chapter so formed will arrange for use of the cathedral by any one of the federated bodies on adequate occasions, and, especially, for an annual united service and communion of them all. At the same time, these

additional uses need not disturb the present daily services, still left in charge of the Dean and his half of the canons; and the change may take place without silencing the morning and evening bells, or the sweet murmur of the customary prayers, that soothe and consecrate so many faithful lives. So far, the old may keep its place and be at peace. But it must not set its face against the new, which also comes to seek a blessing. There are fresh alliances to be sanctified, and more generous fervours to flow into our devotions, and these also must be invited to the same solemn shelter, and ask voice through the same organ-peals. I know not how others may feel; but when I think of those annual trains of worshippers converging upon the Minster gates, then thronging nave or choir with silent thanksgiving to the all-harmonizing Love, looking on the signs of so many holy souls of the living and the dead, responding to the prayers for the unity of them all, and joining in the hymn which seems to fulfil the prayer, no spectacle appears more worthy to fill that grand perspective, more softening to the hearts that join in it, or more true to the parting prayer of Christ: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us." (John xvii. 21.)

THE END.

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